Cultivating place, identity and relations in the city

An ethnographic study of urban agriculture in London

Mari Elise Deraas

Master's Thesis

Department of Anthropology
University of Oslo

November 2013

Figure 1: Annie's Patchwork Farm at St. Michaels Church, Stoke Newington, Hackney

2013

Cultivating place, identity and relations in the city.
An ethnographic study of urban agriculture in London

Mari Deraas

http://www.duo.uio.no

Trykk: Reprosentralen, Universitetet i Oslo

Abstract

Urban agriculture entails the practice of cultivating urban space for edible crops, initiated as local-level efforts, for and amongst urban dwellers. The phenomena have become widespread and popular across Europe and North America, simultaneously with increasingly popular consumer trends such as organic food and ethical trade. In this thesis I have studied urban agriculture in London, a city considered of great importance in the spheres of technology, finance and culture in Europe, and not until recently for its production of food. Drawing on five months of ethnographic research from London, with special attention towards the borough of Hackney, I have woven together accounts of personal experience of reconnection to urban nature, shrouded with the histories of the groups that foster them. Emerging from a narrative of the English as gardeners, moving towards a paradigm of greening and sustainability, my attention has been directed towards the depth and breadth of this attachment to urban agriculture. I have sought to understand urban agriculture as a way of relating to the experience of self in the city of London, through social bonds forged, and a sense of connectedness to place and local environment. I have moreover identified how the urban agriculturalists make use of these practices to inscribe their own imaginaries in the landscape of the city, and thus symbolically root themselves. Markers of identity, ideological beliefs and moral concerns will be acted out and further articulated in the practices of urban agriculture, which is emotionally saturated and consisting of spatial elements that transmit the affect, feelings and emotions that in many cases enhances engagement. This has furthered my attention towards the politics of space and how urban agriculture involves acquiring space and control of that space in order to manifest, proliferate and regenerate awareness of urban sustainability.

Acknowledgements

One's destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things.

Henry Miller.

First and foremost I want to thank the people who made this thesis possible – the urban agriculturalists in London. I am forever grateful for the time I spent in your company and for your willingness to be a part of my research. I could mention a large number of names, but a few people have been of great significance for the project, as well as acquiring a special place in my heart: Hannah, Saleh and Paul – thank you ever so much!

Når jeg nå skal nevne de andre jeg ønsker å takke, vil jeg gjøre det på mitt morsmål. Tusen takk til venner og familie som har holdt ut de siste årenes svingninger i humør og energi, og vært uvurderlige støtte. Ingrid og Tale, Middagsklubben, Anne Marte, Johanna og Hans, jeg er så glad for dere! En særlig takk til Anja som alltid tar telefonen og er en uvurderlig støtte og bestevenn – og Truls for å holdt ut med både meg og mitt flyttelass (opptil flere ganger), og for at jeg alltid er velkommen.

En stor takk til Julie Borchgrevink Seip for å ha hatt tålmodighet til å lese uferdige utkast, og for å ha vært en fantastisk «partner in crime». Mari Vaage har også lest korrektur og vært en god samarbeidspartner og venn, Erling Hess Johansen har entret banen i de kritiske siste ukene og hjulpet til med å få alt formelt på plass, noe Kristoffer Ring også skal ha ære for. Videre må jeg nevne Ola Fjelstad som har gjort et enormt arbeid med å språkvaske nesten 40 000 ord, jeg er stum av takknemmelighet, og som ellers har vært en god venn og nabo. Bengt Andersen, takk for at du har hjulpet meg på vei både her og der, og for å dele av din kompetanse på urban antropologi. Og: bohemen som ironisk nok lærte meg verdien av struktur og fokus – det hadde ikke gått uten deg, takk.

Sist, men ikke minst, må jeg takke min veileder Odd Are Berkaak. Takk for å ha vært en kreativ og inspirerende veileder, for at du har holdt meg tilbake og samtidig dyttet meg fremover, og for at du alltid har vært så generøs med din tid og dine råd. Og takk for at du ikke mistet troen på prosjektet, på tross av noen nederlag på veien, jeg klarte det jo!

Table of Contents

1 Emerging realities in the garden

> *"To say it is political is in a way to reduce it, I mean, there is nothing in my life not affected by this. What I work with, what I like to do during my spare-time, what I eat – yes, I mean, most of the things I do is about growing things and getting my hands dirty with soil. It's like a vocation in life or something"*
>
> Hannah, February 2012

This thesis is concerned with a diverse group of urban local-level efforts in building connections to nature and food production, in the city of London. Emerging from the environmental and sustainability movement, a growing number of people are in various degrees engaged in what I will generally refer to as *urban agriculture.* Commonly, it is local residents grow food and/or raise animals as a direct action to improve conditions for local, organic and sustainable food production – often in densely populated cities. The only contracted labour is done by a head gardener and his/hers apprentices, all other labour is performed by unpaid volunteers. If there is large enough yield, products can be sold commercially or distributed amongst the workers for free, but in any respect it will be consumed within the city for and by the local city dwellers (Ruaf Foundation 2013).

I have made use of a statement made by Hannah, whom became one of my most devoted informants and friends during my fieldwork, as to frame the complexity of engagement this thesis will describe and analyse in the chapters to come. Hannah and I met as volunteers in one of the local urban gardens in Hackney, North-East London. The garden is a part of the work done by *Growing Communities* – a longstanding social enterprise facilitating several urban agricultural projects, as well as a farmers market and an extensive educational scheme.[1] Hannah made her statement while we were squatting on each side of a raised bed overgrown with rocket and Bulls Blood salad, weeding while talking together. It was a rather cold day late in February, still, the sun was large and yellow and the wind promised of warmer days to come – perhaps that is why I recall this as a peaceful and emotionally intense moment. Considering what I had already learnt before entering the field, about how urban agriculture was an action against the current food system and sought to enforce local ownership of food production, I implied that that her engagement could be politically motivated. Slightly hesitant Hannah confirmed to my suspicions, and said that everything changed when learning the political ramifications of industrial farming. Nonetheless, she

[1] I will give a throughout account of Growing Communities and their work for chapter five.

quickly emphasised that her engagement extended beyond the mere ideology of opposition, and that it had become an integrated part of her and her life in London. To "reduce" it to political engagement would imply a form of dialectic argumentations and abstraction from what she considered a *way of life*.

The general aim of this thesis will be to study the varied forms of practices and relations that constitute urban agriculture in London, with a special attendance for the organisation Growing Communities, and what occurs in their gardens in Hackney. Through working, talking and spending time with the volunteers and employees connected to Growing Communities, I got extensive knowledge of who gets involved in urban agriculture, what kind of practices it entails, and the social bonds that emerge from their engagement with urban agriculture. The relations I established in the community garden provided me with further access to the wider set of practices, events, places and institutions that formed what I consider an extensive and important *network of* urban agricultural in London. For Hannah, and the majority of urban agriculturalists that I got to know during my five months of fieldwork, to be engaged in urban agriculture is a complex matter of reconnection to the natural world, sensuous experiences, and novel ways of imagining being and becoming in an urban context. I will provide insight into this complexity, at the same time as I find it compelling to place the phenomena into an historic, discursive as well as anthropological theoretical context. This will underpin how urban agriculture is a generative practise of which sustainable urban life and a sustainable self is the aim.[2]

In the process of preparing for the fieldwork and in the subsequent adaptions of the ethnographic material to an analysis, I became aware of a certain lack as to quantity and in-depth ethnographic research of urban agriculture. In order to make a contribution to fill this gap I have chosen to write a *descriptive thesis*, aiming at providing the readers with substantial knowledge and insight into the phenomenon of urban agriculture in London, and its inherent complexities. I have framed my thesis along the lines of these research questions:

[2] The word *sustainable* is a word open for extensive debate of which I cannot give room for in this thesis. It is an emic word used by my informants to describe concrete actions that they consider capable of maintaining a steady level (of something), without exhausting natural resources, or causing severe ecological damage. It is also applicable as a term to give a general account for a way of life in harmony with nature and its potential yield.

> What is urban agriculture in London and what does it entail in terms of activities performed, relations formed and identities forged? What causes certain Londoners to engage in these practices and how do they express this engagement? In which ways to and to what extent, have urban agriculture become a way of life in the city of London?

A social field in the making

I ensue that a depiction of urban agriculture require an appreciation of a shifting and complex sphere of trajectories of people and institution-like gatherings, as well as freedom from definitional commitments to scale and bounded sites (Tsing 2002: 456). The *notion of network* has gained attention both in the public parlance, in the sphere politics and public management, finance and technology, as well as in social science studies. In an era marked by unprecedented mobility, networks envisage the movements and connections of persons and things through time and space, across boundaries and barriers (Myhre: in press). Thus, I find the notion of network to be an appropriate perspective in analysing urban agriculture in London, as it grasps the character of social relationships and account for the behaviour of those entangled in them (ibid). In this view, a network-perspective will surface social organisation with attention to how people act out, constitute, uphold, or break relations. I cannot discern the network of relations from the material context of the city of London, and that what I describe are essentially urban phenomena. This involves an appreciation of how material entities, institutions and places as also are part of the network as a consequence of informing relations and practices.

In Elizabeth Bott's study of married couples in London in the late 1950's, she emphasised that the notion of network was best suited for "complex" societies (Myhre: in press), a description frequently used to describe the city of London. With just under 9 million inhabitants, and considered the world's most visited city as measured by international arrivals with over 14 million international visits every year, London is a busy and cramped city (Hall 2012: 3). Moreover, it is a city characterised by ethnic and cultural diversity with over half of its population with an ethnic decent from outside the U.K. (Hall 2012: 4). In regards to the "complexity" of London, I use network as a way of describing and manage those flexible and unstable social relations it entails, as well as an attention to the more systematising parts of the network which give a provisional ordering to their quest for a sustainable urban life (Barlett 2005: 4). In regards to defining *the city,* Amin Amit and Nigel Thrift identifies aspects of urban spaces such as the density of people, things, institutions and architectural

forms. In the city will the heterogeneity of lives be juxtaposed in close proximity, and further positioned in various networks of communication and flow, across and beyond the city (2002: 2). It is possible to argue that these aspects are to be found on the countryside, however it does not appear as dense, multiplex and as numerous as in a city such as London.

What furthered my attraction towards applying a network perspective was to be able to account for the process of *emergent realities*. I propose that urban agriculture and the network of urban agriculturalists are in a process of becoming, through establishing alliances, participation and belonging, thus allowing for the emergence of sustainable practices and sustainable selves (Isenhour 2011). The joint effort of working the soil and being a part of a collective, forged upon similar approaches to the lived reality produces a variety of relations and practices that emerge as alternative urban lifestyles. I will bring forth examples of how the network of urban agriculture in London consist of agents that both seeks to maintain the character of flexibility and creativity, while at the same time employ strategies to constitute more predictable and institutional-like features of the network of urban agriculture.

I find it necessary to mention network theories such as *actor-network* theory and *assemblage* theory, as two approaches that employ the term *network* to describe social complexity to avoid totalising concepts and a dualistic perspective (Myhre: in press). These theories are popular, but highly disputed in anthropology today, and I do not posit to contribute to this debate. What I, however, find appealing and convincing of these approaches, is the call for descriptions and analysis of social phenomena without regarding the social as a preconceived entity (Latour 2005). It will be possible to argue that attention to the lived reality is something anthropology has brought force to for a long time before certain contemporary theorists, such as Bruno Latour, John Law, Donna Harraway etc., claimed ownership. Nonetheless, these debates have prompted reflexivity concerning the objects of anthropological study and its representation, particularly in term of distributed agency. I am inspired by how these approaches considers it necessary to analysing social phenomena, and I have strived towards a sensitivity of the complexity of social life, and how the non-human and material realm informs understandings and dealings in the world.

Analytical tools

Agriculture and other subsistence practices, along with the relationship of humans and nature, have attracted much anthropological attention. Ever since Bronislaw Malinowski published his three volume classic, one of which was devoted to agriculture and gardening rites of the Trobriand Islanders (2002 [1935]), anthropologist has taken a keen interest into how people interpret, conceptualize, utilize, and generally manage their knowledge of those domains of environmental experience which encompass living organisms (Degnen 2009). This thesis will seek to contribute to that tradition, although with a slightly different location for this environmental experience – namely the city of London. Broadly speaking this thesis deals with urban life, and adaptation to an urban lifestyle that embraces the relationship of humans and the "natural" realm. My analysis will entail perspectives of how cultivation of the urban environment involves a set of notions, practices and relations that contribute to the making, alteration, and continuation of London. To underline how I intent to account for a set of urban practices, and distinct ways of doing London *green* (Checker 2011; Lucarelli and Røe 2012; Premat 2009), I will give a short review of the position of *urban nature* in this thesis.[3]

At first encounter, one might find that the only active participants in a city are the people who busy themselves among the buildings and street corners. However, one will quickly find that something is amiss in that picture. In London, and probably cities as such, the urban nature is a pervasive force, threatening to invade every corner as weeds, grass, brambles and bushes take over land, birds adding new colour to the sidewalks in the shade of feces, and foxes using the litter cans as comfortable homes for themselves and their cubs. To set apart the sphere of animals, insects, plants and microorganisms in opposition to humans when describing what constitutes a city and making of that city, will be a neglect of the complexity of human involvement in its environment (Amit and Thrift 2002: 27; Pink 2009). Those practicing urban agriculture do in fact embrace this complexity, and seeks to make use of the potential of resources that lies in cultivating urban nature.

Within the last couple of decades, we have seen an extensive debate concerning the human/environment, or nature/culture divide in the social sciences – with the result of increasingly anti-dualist perspectives employed (Barlett 2005; Ingold 2000, 2011; Latour 2005; Myhre: in press). What these perspectives share, is a rejection of clear-cut boundaries

[3] The term "green" is used in variations of studies of urban agriculture and urban environmentalism, and will be a recurrent descriptive term used in this thesis, however I will rather use the term "sustainability" as this was the preferred word used in the field by my informants.

between nature and culture, the dismissal of the human as categorically set apart from other entities, and the struggle with theoretical language that presume an *a priori* distinction between person and things, matter and meaning, representations and reality (Henare et. al 2007: 2).

These developments has been critical for the study of dealing with urban nature, as it opens up for a revision of assumptions of the city as a negation of the natural (Amit and Thrift 2002; Barlett 2005). Urbanization has long been discussed as a process whereby the one kind of environment, namely the "natural" is traded in for, or rather taken over by, a much more crude and unsavoury "built" environment (Heynen et. al. 2006: 4). Urbanity can mark the epitome of modernity as processes of industrialisation and technologisation peaked in the twentieth century, and the built environment comes to dominant attention. Social scientists has recognised that the city springs out of the rural, yet how cities are dominated by concrete, bricks and steel are often treated as an opposition to the wild, active and constantly shifting natural world (Hinchliffe and Whatmore 2006: 127). Further do I regard the structure of modern cities as to make distance from nature possible for a larger group than in the past. Nonetheless, I will state that we build cities in nature, with nature, and through nature, an argument that I will seek to make explicit in the following analysis (Barlett 2005: 4).

Interaction between nature and the modern city raises a series of conceptual complexities. Alternatively, if we understand the city (London in this case) to be a special kind of nodal point within an extending mesh of urbanisation, this still leaves the idea of urban nature as a somewhat ill-defined entity. I find that the urbanisation of nature, a transformation that has gained accelerated momentum over the last few decades, is clearly much more than a gradual appropriation until the last vestiges of "first nature" have all disappeared. The production of urban nature is a simultaneous process of social and biophysical change in which new spaces are created and destroyed, ranging from the technological networks that give sustenance to the modern city, to new appropriation of nature within the urban landscape (Heynen, Kaika and Swyngedouw 2006: 37). I refer to the term *nature* here to encompass two somewhat different clusters of ideas: on the one hand, I use the term to denote a menagerie of concrete forms ranging from the human body to parks, gardens or complete ecosystems. On the other hand, I have responded to how my informants describe their engagement, and how they invoke *nature* as an ideological and metaphorical schema for the imagining of present reality,

what the future holds, and what they imagine the future could and should entail (Gandy 2006:64).

In addition, the anthropology of *place* has proven useful, and I find that much of the processes depicted in the following are in place-making practices. Gottlieb underlines that "Nature resides in place, whether in a city, suburb, rural area, or designated wilderness area" (2001:449). Thus, I argue for "an ethics of conviviality that is urban-based, emplaced, embodied, and enlivened through multiple stories enacted and expressed (…). Places are materialized as historical and meaningful, and no place is produced by a singular vision of how it might or might not be" (Doreen and Rose 2012: 2). Within the nexus of body and terrain, and labour and social interaction in the garden, a place of meaning is both shaped by, and shapes the participants. This thought is furthermore rooted in the notion of places as relationally constituted: An understanding in which animals, sites, and stories all shape, and are shaped by, entangled and circulating patterns of intra-action (ibid: 1; see also Luccarelli and Røe 2012: 2). I argue that these dimensions of place intersect and build on each other, joining perceptions of the natural world, both in the city of London and on the English countryside (Barlett 2005: 52).

I find it important to note that despite an underlying notion of emergent realities and that meaning is in process; there are features of human life that are seemingly permanent and stabile. I will look into how groupings of agents take on institutional-like forms and agencies, as well as how segments of the urban agriculturalists strive towards settling the network and constituting predictable arrangements in their lives. I want to make use of how Ingold seeks to understand the temporality of the cityscape through a *dwelling* perspective (2000: 189). "For anthropologists, to adopt a perspective of this kind means bringing to bear the knowledge born of immediate experience, by privileging the understanding that people derive for their lived, everyday involvement in the world" (ibid). I want to bring forth the *everydayness* of urban agriculture in this thesis, claiming that urban agriculture is not a practice set apart from daily urban life, but a part of, and even constitutive of everyday dwelling. The everyday life has been central in urban studies, which acknowledge it as something of many dimensions: *daily life*, defined as recurrent human and material practices, *the everyday*, as an existential or phenomenological condition, and *everydayness*, understood as a kind of immanent life force running through everything (Amit and Thrift 2002: 9). An insight into the everydayness of the area has provided me with embodied knowledge to

understand how this gathering of people adapt and relate to a historic structuring of the landscape, present concerns and notions about future risks (Hall 2012: 3).

As a final note, I will reflect on how to approach the subject of *agency* in the coming analysis. Marilyn Strathern has defined agency as "the manner in which people allocate causality or responsibility to each other, and thus the sources of influence and direction of power" (Strathern [1987] quoted in Mueggler 2001: 252). Agency in this sense pivots on understanding or experience of how lasting institutions, relationships, or practices constrain or enable action (Mueggler 2001: 252). In my study, I wish to lean on Strathern's definition in searching for how people allocate the capacity to affect events, outcomes, or behaviours dependent on how they imagine their own capacity to be the arbiter of a new social reality (ibid). I infer that it is in the social bonds forged and in the sense of place, that the agents of urban agriculture allocate this capacity, as well as an effect of the occurrence of critical events that is distinguished in temporal chains of causality. I will further elaborate this argument, as well as those mentioned briefly in the previous paragraphs, in the following analysis.

Notes on methodology

Anthropology has long, and rightly, insisted that the road to understanding lies in practical participation (Ingold 2011: 20). Hence, my principal mode of ethnographic research was to be a part of urban agriculture, primarily as a researcher, but in practice, as an urban agriculturalist. This allowed *experience-near* ethnography, as well as access to some parts of the relational network that I think I would have otherwise left unknown. I would always state my purpose when meeting new people or visiting new places, and when I revealed the fact that I was there by virtue of research it never did cause negative reactions. Rather, I got the impression that people were pleased that I was there, and that to conduct research on what they were doing, was in fact a timely thing to do. My closest informants were educated, several with university degrees, and familiar with anthropology or the mode of ethnographic research. One of the apprentices even had a degree in visual anthropology, and asked me about methodology and my thoughts on important anthropological aspects of urban agriculture. I was always honest about my procedures and was not reluctant about disclosing whatever preliminary findings or observations of patterns I had made. I got the impression that this strategy contributed to them regarding me as a trustworthy and respected part of the network I sought to study. Nevertheless, my role as a researcher would not be something that

foregrounded in my relations or practices, as I quickly realised that people tended to relax and open up automatically when I proceeded along in much the same manner as they did. In the garden, you were valued by your willingness to work hard and how you collaborated with the others, so I quickly learnt that I had to prove myself as a worker before gaining the trust of my informants.

To aspire for accurate descriptions of the actors, actions and event is an essential goal to pursue, as a means for maintaining veracity and objectivity (Stewart 1998). Nonetheless, I consider it important to acknowledge how the actual involvement of the ethnographer is requisite to get access to the field and gain necessary insight. I favour an approach where the ethnographer not simply is included as a catalyst or tool to invoke information, but also a constitutive part of the field, and thus part of the analysis. I have mentioned the mode of becoming and becoming together, which I argue applies for *knowing* together as well. I consider the part I played as a researcher, as well as a constitutive part of the practices I studied, as a process of knowing together. As my presence forged reflection and articulation of present concerns and future risks, human activities that affected sense of place and thus sense of self (Tilley 1994: 23). To ensure sensitivity towards these processes, I found inspiration in how Sarah Pink employs a *sensory* mode of doing ethnographic research, with an explicit attention towards how the ethnographer, as well as the participants, sense the world around them and the activities they do (2008; 2009; 2011). This is in line with a rejection of separation between body and mind through acknowledging senses, emotions and perceptions as constitutive of grasping our lived realities (Csordas 1990: 36; Ingold 2000). I also find the way Pink considers ethnography as a place-making process as convincing and timely (2008). Pink asserts that it is indeed by attuning him- or herself to other peoples practice that the ethnographer might be able, through his or hers embodied experience, to *make,* and thus *comprehend,* the places that are investigated (2008: 175). One might argue that sensory experience and perception has always been central to the ethnographic encounter, and thus also to the ethnographers research. However, Pink states that "this makes it all the more necessary to explicitly *account for* the senses" (2009: 10, original italics). In the following depictions, I will account for some of my own sensory experiences as well as how my informants expressed theirs. This, I will do through describing movements, facial expressions and tone of voice, but in large, I will have to rely on what was verbally expressed – acknowledging that spatial and narrative experiences are embedded in one another.

According to Christopher Tilley: “It is precisely because narrative is seemingly so ‘natural’ a part of human existence that it is both an important resource for analysis and understanding and something whose non-critical use as *merely* description is something to be wary of” (1994: 32, original italics). Thus, a critical understanding of urban agriculture in London requires attention and depictions of narratives as well as the biographical stories employed to explain a line of reasoning, or simply to get to know one another better. Narratives establish bonds between people, and between people and features of the landscape – as both land and language are symbolic recourses drawn on to foster correct social behaviour and values (ibid: 33). Spatial stories will introduce temporality in making locale markers of individual and group existence. Thus, I make use of narrative as a mean of understanding and describing the world in relation to agency, through linking locales, landscapes, actions, events and experiences together by providing synthesis of heterogeneous phenomena (ibid: 32).

In regards to the practicalities of fieldwork, I started out with bringing a notebook to the gardens, aiming at taking notes whenever I spoke with someone or to remember observations I did. However, I quickly realised that I would have to attend the same tasks as my informants in order for them to converse about more than formal courtesies with me, and for that, I needed to keep my hands free. Thus, I would rely on *headnotes* whenever physically doing urban agriculture and then write down accounts of the day when returning to my room at night (Sanjek 1990:93). In occasions that it was suitable, such as seminars, talks or the few interviews I did, I would make audio recordings.

Another methodological process of importance is how I chose whom to include and, thus, exclude in thesis. As I have mentioned, my mode of research was to volunteer in the community garden where I was acquainted with a number of people, both men and females, both older than, and of my own age. Some of these became close friends, others less close, and others remained acquaintances, much like a common social network will look like. In this thesis, I have focused my attention on the close and less close people I knew and not so much on the larger group of acquaintances as they would also represent the group of less embedded agents. This has allowed me to have a proper discussion with the people of concern how I could make use of the knowledge and observations I gained through our friendships, in the thesis (Hutchinson 1996: 11-12). All of the people described in this thesis have agreed to participate and have not wished to be anonymous, something I have adhered to. Nonetheless, I have chosen to exclude a couple of people that I would otherwise have

liked to include, as I have found them not to fully understand what they were agreeing to. These were people with mental health issues and difficult life situations. Regarding the participation of Growing Communities, they also underlined how they did not wish to be anonymous, and that I was welcome to "reveal" what they worked with and how they worked. Establishing themselves as a social enterprise for the benefit of the community required openness and honesty about their affairs, as well as how they welcomed publicity about their presence in Hackney. Thus, I have not made a point of concealing the identity of anyone, nor the whereabouts of my fieldwork.

As a final note on methodology, I have to address residency and access to the personal sphere, of which I must acknowledge that I gained limited access to the urban agriculturalists when not engaging in matters relating to urban agriculture. To begin with, I lived in a cohabiting household not far from the garden, and the last two months I lodged in the house of a friend of one of the employees in Growing Communities. As I got to know some of the most engaged urban agriculturalists, I would be invited over to their house for tea or dinner, as well as the odd party. Nonetheless, these were relatively young people without families living in cohabiting households and without a structured course of day, let along week. This meant that they were hardly *at home* as their lives and mode of living would in large happen outside their home. When not attending events or work-related practices, they would hang out in cafés with their friends, or in the pub – practices that I were invited along to and took part in. This lack of access to their lives beyond urban agriculture can off-course be held against my ethnographic findings as I have not been able to provide enough "evidence" about whether they "do as they say they do", or if they applied their ideas about green urban living in their own lives. However, I argue that I did get sufficient information about their everyday practices, traits and habits as to posit the arguments that I do in this thesis, and I am confident in the veracity of the depictions to which I have referred. I will more so claim that the purpose of ethnographic and anthropological studies is not to expose our informants, or catch them in what possibly can be a lie or adjustments of realities. I am rather concerned with doing my informants, their lives and work that I was so kindly allowed to take part in, justice, by providing a honest and thorough study of how urban dwellers respond to a complex and shifting sphere of environmental threats, increased urbanisation and financial instability.

Preparing the field

The thesis will proceed in the following manner: In this introductory chapter I have provided contextual information about the chosen field site, and I further accounted for the theoretical and anthropological tools applied, as well as revealed the methodological considerations made.

In the next chapter, I will provide a brief historical backdrop to the present study as means for unravelling the relations in the network, as well as identify urban agriculture within an ideological and political discourse.

Chapter three will begin with what Christopher Tilley has described as a classical *phenomenological* strategy: The bracketing of experience (1994: 13). Through a description of a day of volunteering, the work done, the mode of social interaction and organisation as well as a segment of agent engaged in the garden, I have sought to depict and analyse the relationship between being and being-in-the-world. I have treated this relationship as the constitutive practices of individual and collective processes of identity and identification (Tilley 1994:12). In addition to doing and being, I will investigate the notion of *becoming* – and in this case *becoming together* (Harraway 2003) through a process of place and place-making (Ingold 2000). I consider the manner in which pairs and collective efforts undertook the work done in the garden as essential for establishing a sense of place amongst the participants. In analysing reflections and articulations of these processes, I will consider the garden as a *proto-space* for what is considered sustainable use of urban space.

In chapter four I will make use of the analysis of coherency, but alter my attention toward the process of inclusion and exclusion according to different modes of becoming in the city. I will make use of Geertz, through applying his distinction *deep* and *shallow players*, as I loosely divide the participants into ideology holders and pragmatists. The former are committed to the tenets of how urban agriculture is a part of a larger political concern about climate change, environmental issues and peak oil, while the latter are more concerned with personal satisfaction and social benefits (Andersen 2000).[4]

[4] Peak oil, according to M. King Hubbert's "Peak theory", is the point in time when the maximum rate of petroleum extraction is reached, after which the rate of production is expected to enter terminal decline. The term is frequently used in contemporary society by environmentalist organisations to describe a state in which maximum rate of extraction of oil has been reached and that we will now experience a considerable shortage of oil and access to the limited supplies of oil that there is.

The different ways of "playing" urban agriculture, either deep or shallow, will provide a framework in which to analyse how urban agriculture is a context for employing individual strategies of improved livelihood in the urban perimeters of the city. However, this divide is simply to ease the task of analysing the phenomena, as the roles described are messy and overlapping (Hinchliffe and Whatmore 2006: 164). Moreover, a focus on individual strategies will not suffice, as employment of such strategies depend on structural considerations such as legislative arrangement, allocation of funds and a public discourse and policy that welcomes cultivation of London for edible plants (Pink 2008).

Chapter five will be concerned with the development, maintenance and proliferation of the network of urban agriculture, through *ad-hoc* and more permanent ways of operating. In highlighting these features I will give a throughout review of Growing Communities and their work. I see that my decision to leave this review to the last chapter might seem slightly odd, however I decided upon this solution in order to underline the generative aspect of urban agriculture and the processes that occur within the garden. I have chosen to start from within, and then broaden my perspective outwards and onto the relations that shrouds, facilitates and connects to the garden. This will even extend to how the London authorities are included into this process.

Finally, in my concluding remarks, will I draw together central arguments made in the analysis, as to underpin my arguments about how urban agriculture in London is a process of becoming through establishing sustainable selves and sustainable everyday practices in the urban sphere. I will also give suggestions to how my study could be continued and expanded, as a call for more anthropological attention towards what I find to be emerging urban realities about sustainability and greening in many cities around the world.[5]

[5] Urban agriculture has gained momentum in major cities such as New York (see Melissa Checker (2011): "Wiped out by the "Greenwave": Environmental Gentrification and he Paradoxical Politics of Urban Sustainability"), Detroit (see George Galster (2012): *Driving Detroit. The quest for Respect in the Motor City*), Berlin, Stockholm, and Havana (see Adriana Permat (2009): "State Power, Private Plots and the Greening of Havana's Urban Agricultural Movement").

2 The durability of the English garden

Our nation is a garden.

Rudyard Kipling 1911

In the following paragraph I will give a limited, though important account of the cultural history of the garden as a *socially productive space* in the English context. Drawing together memories, imaginings, dominant narratives and present reproductions of those narratives and meanings, I see that urban agriculture and the making of gardens and sustainable practices in London are embedded in the myth of England as the "green and pleasant lands" (Duffy 2002: 152). Involving a range of issues from class and access to food, and to notions of tranquillity and authenticity, a particular process of *sedimentation* occur, one in which ideas and narratives permeates the material/natural environment (Mueggler 2001: 26). I will make use of the term landscape as to both denote rural England as well as the urban material context of London, as I see human life as a process that involves the passage of time and as a process of formation of the landscape in which people have lived (Ingold 2000: 189). These landscapes are products of dwelling, and denote spaces that are the combined product of human and bio-ecological forces, or as a "medium of cultural expression" (Coates 1998: 110). Human activities become inscribed within a landscape so that personal biographies, social identities and a biography of place are intimately connected, whether it is in a city or on the countryside (Tilley 1994: 27).

The English as gardeners

Peter Coates reminds us that the "timeless" landscape of the English countryside acknowledged as the "authentic" England is in fact an outcome of specific historic circumstances, notably the commercial revolution as expressed through the acceleration of the rate of enclosure and imparkation (1998: 111). Nonetheless to cultivate England through agriculture and pastoral practices has been denotative for the material configurations of the English countryside as there are few areas that have not been altered by human interference. Thus, it is not the idea of the wild nature or untouched land that is of greatest concern amongst the British population, but how best to cultivate the landscape (Duffey 2002: 153). The Campaign to Protect Rural England gains massive support by the English, as well as becoming an important lobbyist in the fight to protect elements such as original stonewalls,

and the rolling hills of agricultural land (CPRE: 2013). Whereas one in Norway will strive towards the idea of the wild nature to access authentic calm and peace, one will in England emphasis the quintessential English farmland as a space for tranquillity. The practice of farming has declined massively the past 60-70 years, especially in terms of pastoral practices, but to "reconnect" with nature through sojourning in the countryside is massively popular and important amongst Englishmen. The concept of authenticity and tranquillity is to be found in the landscape of rolling hills and hidden footpaths along between the many small stone cottages that dominate areas of rural England, as welcomed breaks from city-living (Duffey 2002: 153-154).

Figure 2: Farmland, Devon, U.K.

Also the practice of horticulture and gardening holds a privileged place in the English cultural imagination, including both private and public gardens. To have a well maintained and esthetical pleasing garden has great social value in the British society (Tilley 2009: 173) and according to a survey in May 2005 by National Savings & Investments, British gardeners spend £4.2 billion on their gardens annually, and other sources estimate spending's of £5.15 billion on garden products in Britain for 2060 (Degnen 2009: 161). Gardening shows abound on TV and radio, as well as weekly gardening sections in all major newspapers, with English gardeners becoming celebrities in their own right (Degnen 2009: 155). Not to speak of Jamie Oliver who has become an iconic figure in terms of food, cooking and "the food revolution" with over ten years of TV-shows and cooking books, as well as the attention he has given to the British people and their relations to food (Jamie Oliver 2013). The past years it has been possible see resurgence in the interest of gardening for food with more edible plants and

vegetables, in line with organic principles. Some holds Jamie Oliver partly responsible for this acceleration in interest as he has become one of the most persistent preachers for the necessity of organic food production and ethical food consumption.

Cultivating the city

Returning to the city, it is important to underpin that to cultivate areas inside London is in fact not a modern invention, but has been an integrated part of the construction of London since its beginning, however with different intentions and results. During the 1800 century London was to be provided with food from surrounding farmland and cultivation of green areas inside the city would mainly be for leisure activities, esthetical pleasure and to provide the residents with "green lungs" in the compact and polluted city (Bartlett 2005: 5). However, already in the late 1800s local authorities recognised the accelerating problem of increasingly deprived parts of London, and how the residents of such areas could access food. The importance of outlining areas within the city for growing food became evident when land was distributed by the local governments in London for working class families to ensure access to nutritious food among the disadvantaged. These are still prominent parts of the city in London with over 20 000 allotments and several city farms (Steel 2008: 26). The allotments have mostly remained a part of the development of London, albeit with no-where near as much interest as has been seen the past five years. All of the allotment sites have waiting lists and many have been forced to close their lists as they cannot handle all the requests (Steel 2008: 14).

Another crisis was to revitalise the need for London dwellers to grow food in the city and this time it affected every one, despite social positioning. During the war years from the First to the Second World War the surrounding farmland was not able to provide London with enough food and import of food was restricted. To prevent what was seen as a likely outbreak of famine, the authorities decided to make use of all available land area for growing food in the famous *Dig for Victory* campaign. Even large parts of Kensington Gardens in London became transformed into a potato field to ensure the citizens of London food (Steel 2008: 40).

Figure 3: Vegetable gardens in Kensington Garden, London, 1942

This tells us that urban agriculture is not a new and modern phenomenon as such in England, but that it has long been absent from the political agenda. After the war years Great Britain and England witnessed a strong growth in urbanisation and depopulation of the countryside, and interest in kitchen gardens and food production generally gave way to the new consumer trends (Dengen 2009: 153). Urban dwellers would have tight time-schedules and busy working days in offices and factories, which created a need for fast cooking and easier access to prepared food. The "ready-made meals" has become a part of the English everyday eating more than anything, and without direct access to food off the land, food had to be stored in new ways such as deep-frozen or canned. The interest for working the land for food was naturally dismissed in the city, in favour for easy, quick and accessible meals (Steel 2008:42).

Political-ideological relations

What has been mentioned up till now suggests an image of the English garden as peaceful, esthetical and at times a necessity employed as a regenerative space. Gardening and gardens as such is an integrated part of English cultural history and their cultural narrative, maybe not shared by everyone, but a recognisable feature of the historic and cultural image of England that exists in discourses about national identity (Dengen 2009; Duffy 2002; Steel 2008). I will argue for how a narrative of the "global environmental crisis" simultaneously informs the renewal of food production in the city, as well as a perspective on urban sustainability.

Inspired by Isenhour's research of urban imaginings and practices of sustainable living in Sweden, I argue that this conceptualization of sustainability expressed and acted out by my informants in London, reflects issues with complex commodity chains and global environmental issues (2011: 108). These perspectives has potential for formulating a story of the peaceful, although antagonistic and radical garden and gardening.

"How do we feed the urban communities in a sustainable way in the face of climate change, ecological crises and fossil fuel depletion?" (Short 2012) is a descriptive question of what is on stake, posed on the web-site of the organisation of Growing Communities in Hackney. This suggests that the gardens are not primarily shelters from society, but serves as venues for engagement, activism and opposition. These ideological concerns reflect an international discourse about food policy, environmental and consumer power in the last 20 years has grown large and significant, particularly in North America and Europe. Historically it is possible to find decades-long discourses about environmental problems in the world, but at the Rio Conference in 1992, the cities' role in exacerbating the world's environmental problems were put on the political agenda. Due to increasing urbanization and concern for the consequences this had for the environment, a need for sustainable urban development and a requirement of political commitment to achieve this was formulated. In the aftermath of the conference, and the consecutive conferences held, various actions has been initiated and it is hard not to find a city in Europe and North America that has sustainability on the political agenda (Luccarelli and Røe 2012: 7). Among the measures such as bike paths and recycling there has been little focus on food production and food supply to the cities, which in fact is regarded by an increasing amount of people as the fundament for urban life (Steel 2008: 10). Urban agriculture as a phenomenon and activity can be seen as a direct response to the need to include food production and food security as part of sustainable urban development, and even as an activity seeks to subvert current urban politics on the subject.

In London the issue of food politics has gained momentum amongst London consumers and the trend of ethical consumption of organic, local and fair-trade products is widespread. Their demands are something both independent vendors and chain-stores have adhered to as these products are now-days extensively available, and to get a cup of organic coffee or a locally sourced slice of ham on your sandwich is possible all over London. Despite how easy it is to get hold of these products, the demand for local and sustainable food has taken a turn for the more practical and direct, in line with the previous arguments made. People want to grow

their own food, with their own hands, and in their own neighbourhoods – despite them residing in one of the largest and most densely populated cities in Europe. This attention towards cultivating urban areas for food has even taken a step further than the common allotments – now all kinds of spaces in the city are potential gardening plots. As we will see a variation of people take interest in developing community gardens, however in general these projects are driven by educated and resourceful people that not actually are in need to grow their own food (Degnen 2009: 155). The increase in urban agriculture occur despite how the majority of people involved in urban agriculture are people of means to procure their daily meals without going through the timely and demanding – if not uncertain – process of cultivating it first. Would it not be more convenient to move out of the city where land is more available and far less expensive and indulge in cultivation practices that indeed are more associated with rural space?

I suggest that it is possible to trace this activity to the narrative of the English garden and the popularity of gardening per se in England, in line with the previous historic and contextual information. This love for gardening has been a material configuration of the city as much of private buildings have space for both a front and a back garden – respectively to display your social character and as a retreat, following Bhatti and Church (2001). I suggest that this long-standing and traditional narrative of the English garden has been fused with a more recent narrative and a trans-national discourse concerning environmental issues, climate change, and peak oil and food politics. Gardens preserve some elements of what is viewed as nature, but often in a form that is constrained, bent and sheared, and are treated as miniature patches for cultivation of the landscape (Bartlett 2005: 5). I argue that Growing Communities make use of the gardens as well as their other urban agricultural practices as proto-space that hinges on the ability to both serve as a secluded space for tranquillity and sensuous experiences, but also as a space in which ideological concerns can be acted out, contested and shared. This space can be used as a reflection of how to establish sustainable selves and sustainable practices and thus become generative for novel modes of urban life in the city of London, and cities as such. To begin with I will give an account of this process, with a focus on Allan's Garden in Stoke Newington, Hackney.

3 Working towards meaning

> *The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying this is mine, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society.*
>
> Jean-Jacques Rousseau

The point of departure in this chapter is an urban tour of the area from my apartment to Allan's Garden further north in Hackney.[6] I will make use of the walk from my apartment to the community garden where I was to volunteer, to convey the complex uses and understandings within this shared terrain of the high street, residential area, the public parks and the community garden (Hall 2012:2). To highlight urban footprints and paths will further discard the idea of the city as an ordered and segregated pattern of mobility, and rather assert the city as myriads of complex and mixed spatially stretched networks of communication (Amit and Thrift 2002: 22). My everyday pathways were entangled, to paraphrase Ingold, with the pathways of other agents, forged through daily encounters, or simply the passing of bodies in this densely populated area (2004: 326). With our movements and practices, we negotiate the city and construct imaginaries, and thus, we make, continue, or rearrange the urban landscape (Amit and Thrift 2002: 22).

Hackney as an area in transition

In the early morning, in a rather affluent area of east London, I am getting ready for the Monday volunteer session in Allan's Garden, the focal point for my fieldwork the rest of the spring. The apartment I am subletting is just off the main street, and I can hear the morning rush of people walking hurriedly off to work, parents bringing their happy or crying children to school, and the hundreds of busses and cars that causes a distant sound of thunder down the main street. The area where I am situated is a fifteen-minute drive north of Liverpool street station and the financial district City of London. Even though it is mainly housing and small-scale commercial activity in the area, it still has the tone of down town, which indeed is most noticeable in the morning. It is a beautiful, but chilly day, and aware of the fact that I am about to spend six hours outside working with the cold soil, I put on my new investment: a thick sweater knitted with Scottish sheep's wool, thermal underwear, scarf and hat. All fully

[6] I am inspired by Sarah Pink and her use of urban tours as sensory ethnography in urban areas (2008; 2009).

clothed, with sturdy shoes and a packed lunch, I make my way from my apartment in Stoke Newington on foot to Allan's Garden.

Figure 4: Map of boroughs in London

As I leave my street, which is more or less a continuous row of Victorian terraced houses, with the quintessential polished brick appearance and decorative small front gardens, I take a right up the high street of quite a different character. Passing the East-European wedding shop with dresses so shiny that it will hurt your eyes, the sweet smell of the Turkish barbershop crowded with men having their morning shave, fills my nostrils. As I continue walking, I take a peek through the window at a pub where a couple of middle-age men are enjoying their first pint of the day, and continue past the more trendy cafés where young people are having freshly brewed coffee and croissants. The street also features a variation of vendors, such as Turkish bakeries, selling filled pancakes off the stove, the common Tesco Metro, and in between them, the odd vintage shops and designer boutiques.

As suggested, a walk up the high street can be a sensuous experience of the kind of change the Stoke Newington has gone through the past decades, with an odd mixture of the past, the present and notions about the future, as I share my pathway and walk with the pathways of others (Pink 2009). The borough of Hackney is one of the areas in London that has undergone profound changes in demography the past ten years, and is still a subject of *gentrification* (Bridge, Butler and Lees 2012: 1). It has changed from being a less affluent area marked by a population of mixed ethnic groups and high rate of unemployment, towards an area characterised by white people under the age of forty (ibid). The majority live in single

adult households or in adult cohabiting adult households, as opposed to the mixed generation household that was most common only a decade ago. An explosion in property prices, as well as a change in the commercial activity in the area marks the effect of this. There has been a growth in small independent vendors who sell specialty clothes, furniture or delicacy food and drinks. Moreover, it has become a trendy area to "go out", as there is a big and varied offer of restaurants, pubs, clubs and venues for music and theatre (Mayhew 2011). As depicted, there is still a distinct mix of people, and the area is vibrant with different activities and relations across and between changing social gatherings of people, places and institutions (Bridge et. al 2012: 3). A large group of less affluent people continue to live in the area due to the large number of social housing estates. Hackney council own and manage these housings, and people who, of different reasons, need the assistance of the council allocate the apartments. Most of the estates were put up during the 1980s and their tall brick appearance stand out amongst the pretty Victorian buildings, which might be one of the reasons why the area has not undergone a complete gentrification, but still keeps up it's "east-side appearance". In the past three decades alone, both Conservative and Labour governments have introduced a wide variety of housing and urban policies which have aimed, at least in part, to increase or maintain tenure or social mix within residential neighbourhoods (Hall 2012: 4). Hence, the area consists of different segments of the British society – if one divides people in terms of ethnicity, income, and education (Butler and Robson 2011: 13).

In regards to recruitment of volunteers and apprentices to the garden and the other work Growing Communities did, it reflects the policy of social mixing. All of the people I met in the garden resided in the area of Hackney, most of them in the "heart" of Hackney: Stoke Newington. Despite Jack, one of the former apprentices, none were originally from Hackney, but settled there as a consequence of going to school or working in London. Those who were now deeply involved in the work of Growing Communities explained that they wanted to continue living in an area with proximity to their work, as well as how they enjoyed the "diversity of Hackney". As I have mentioned, one can consider Hackney somewhat of a trendy area. Thus, it attracts many young people under the age of forty who has not yet settled with a family and permanent jobs. The majority of the volunteers and apprentices can be said to fit into that group, but some were also recruited from the group of people who resided in social housing estates. These were people who for some reason had fallen out of work and now had time on their hands of which they decided to make use of in the garden. They would tell me that the work in the garden would prove beneficial for their life-situation,

as it would relive anxiety and experience of loneliness and depression. Thus, the complexity of social relations and the process of gentrification, reflect the assemblages of people in the garden and Growing Communities. However, there were one exception, and that was the mix of ethnic decent – as the profound majority were people with British ethnic decent, and considered "white". If they had another background, they would have lived in England most of their lives, and shared much of the English attraction towards gardening and reconnection to nature through gardening.

This historic structuring of the city bring to pass the question of whether the proximities and crossovers of bodies and spaces in an urban locality, such as Stoke Newington, have bearing on social configurations and conviviality (Hall 2012: 5). I find that it is likely that the friction that arises in this process of gentrification that creates a potential for creativity, innovation and new expressions – as traditions and norms are far from settled (Amit and Thrift 2002: 5). In fact, the notion that cities spur out of creativity is an old one, and Richard Florida argues that " […] creativity has become the principal driving force in the growth and development of cities, regions and nations" (2002: 7, original italics). This is not to understand that creativity is an essentially urban feature, as opposed to lack of creativity in rural areas. However, the mode of relations and interactions in urban way of life are highly flexible and varied, which carries a large potential to choose social configurations of conviviality. Recognising that urban life is a product of mixture through different kinds of mobility, from flows of people to commodities and information, this is not a simple statement of multiplicity or complexity (Amit and Thrift 2002: 3). Regarding these arguments, I find it interesting to note that Hackney is the borough with the largest number of registered community gardens. Growing Communities initiated the first community led enterprise for distribution of organic food, and it is a site for the first all organic Farmers Market in London – also run by volunteer labour by local residents and the farmers who sell their food. Much attention has been given to how Hackney, and especially Stoke Newington and Dalston, stands out with a significant number of "green projects" and local citizen initiatives for sustainable city development (Hackney Council 2013). It is evident that the character of the area, and the process of gentrification, has a generative effect that brings to pass alternations of everyday practises and establishments of new modes of doing the city of London. In the following, we will see that it is not simply the mix of people and variation in social relations that prompts new configurations within the urban perimeters, but that realities and becoming emerge through

joint endeavour and the gathering effect of conviviality initiated through cultivation practices (Amit and Thrift 2002: 27).

The garden

The destination of my walk, Allan's garden, situates in a residential street off the high street in a small park. The garden is slightly hidden behind a row of houses and back gardens, but reveals itself as a picturesque change in scenery from outside the gate. As I enter, I feel a slight unstable change in my step as the ground change from asphalt to the woodchip covered pathways inside the garden. Despite how the exhaust fumes that one cannot escape in central London lingers on in my nostrils, the air inside the garden is shrouded with the mixed smell of decaying compost, the tangy bushes of sage that covers the fence and the peppery rocket dominating one of the raised beds near the entrance. I have not walked far off from the high street, and if I lift my head, residential houses are still clearly visible over the fence. In many ways, the city shrouds the garden on all sides. Nonetheless, the scenery, the atmosphere and the sensational experiences are very much different from the urban world outside. I argue for an understanding of this sensuous shift when walking into the garden, as essential as tin order to understand the attraction for being in the garden, and am a part of what make the garden and the gardening practices essentially urban. This sensuous shift is likely to not be as powerful in a rural area, as gardens and agriculture are common features, and to enter a garden will probably not prompt the same experiences of change between the garden and outside scenery, as in the city of London.

When inside the garden, I quickly notice the Head Grower, Paul, wearing loose fit jeans, sturdy shoes and a woollen sweater, fit for work. With both his feet literally stuck into the compost, his body displays strength using a large garden fork to turn the big amount of leafs, weeds, and rotten vegetables around to increase the stream of oxygen, and improve the decay. Seeing me he halts, leans his body on the fork and greets me welcome with a soft smile on his face. We exchange a few sentences about how we spent the weekend, before I walk past the raised beds (happily noticing that the small seedlings of mitzuna salad that I took part in planting last week has have responded to the sunny weather and grown), further around the small pond area and inside the shed to put my bag down. In between tools of all sizes, spare boots and gloves, there is a book for signing in and out as a volunteer, and I write down my name and the time of my entrance.

The volunteer sessions start at ten o'clock in the morning, and by the time I arrive the garden is already busy with activity. As Head Grower Paul is in charge of managing the actual practice of growing and harvesting crops, as well as maintenance of the site and coordinating the volunteers and the work they do. Paul and his apprentices do the only contracted labour – unpaid volunteers contribute to all the rest. The requirement for volunteering is a simple introductory course held the first Monday of each month, without the need for registering in advance. Paul gives a tour around the garden, explains what they grow and why, as well as some of the procedures of sowing, planting and harvesting. As a probable consequence of how easy it was to join and the frequent opportunities to take part, I met a diverse group of people through the months volunteering.

I find it hard to make general statements of what kind of people that attended these volunteer sessions, as they varied in terms of age, gender, occupation, ethnicity, and reason for being there. Nonetheless, I would say that the majority, who came and returned more than once, were educated people, in their twenties or early thirties, and most of them of British decent. It was a balanced number of both men and women who attended, with a slightly larger number of women. In fact, the issue of gender and sexuality was under-communicated to the extent that it was not a subject for debate. I did not come across couples who volunteered together and although people would mention their partners, it was not given much attention. I will leave the issue of gender at that, as I realise that subject of gender relations demand substantial space for analysis, something that I have chosen not to prioritise in this thesis. Nonetheless, it is worth noticing that these subjects were not a part of the common discourse to the extent that I did not feel judged by my gender, appearance or sexuality.

Returning to the attendance of these volunteer sessions they were highly flexible. Some people would join once, without returning, while others made volunteering a part of the weekly routine and personal practices. Nonetheless, the garden, and what I consider the social cohesiveness, were dependent on both these weak and strong ties (Granoveter 1973). To allow for different levels of participation and engagement, the work of Growing Communities reached out to a broad spectrum of people, which was vital for the establishment of the garden as a place in the urban landscape, as well as the diverse network related to urban agriculture across London (Amit and Thrift 2002: 7).

To begin with, I wish to address a subject that caught my attention early on, and that I consider of focal importance: The reasons people have for entering the sphere of urban

agriculture, and how they make time and place in their busy urban life to continue attending these practises. A methodological tool used throughout the fieldwork, was to talk to people about their initial engagement with urban agriculture, why they decided to do so, and what effect it has had upon their lives. What these conversations surfaced was how defining moments in time led to concrete changes in what people would describe as their "past lives". These events became crucial for what they now perceived as a good or bad life, and a consequence of employing these new perspectives had been to engage in varied ways in urban agriculture. Such a focus on events are highlighted by Bruce Kapferer, in explaining what he calls *ripple effects*: That some events cause a chain of new events to occur, that gives way to establishment of new engagements and practices performed (2010: 5). Kapferer will even go to the extent of describing how perceptions and conceptions of reality might alter as a consequence of some events (ibid) – something that I see fitting as my informants would relate their change of course in life to new conceptions of being and becoming in the world. Anthony Giddens also addresses what he calls *faithful moments* as transition points which have major implications – not just for the circumstances for an individuals' future conduct, but for self-identity as these moments will reshape the reflexive project of identity (Giddens 1991:142). I will return to "the project of identity" in chapter four.

As I leave the shed, I see Amy, a British woman in her early thirties and a regular volunteer for the Monday sessions, enter the garden on her bike. She leaves it at the bike stand which is crowded, as usual, before heading towards me and the shed. Wearing a woollen sweater, jeans and a waterproof jacket she looks fit for manual labour, still she has the look of an urban resident rather than a farmer. With a smile, she tells me that she feels energised by the sunny weather and that she is looking forward to get her "hands dirty". Together, we walk over to Paul to get information of today's work and the atmosphere is relaxed and happy. Paul takes out the small, slightly tattered notebook he keeps in the back pocket of his jeans, and shows us the list of tasks for the day. Asking what kind of work we did last time he gives us several options, and not before long we decide that Amy and I are to start on the job of taking out dead and decaying plants in one of the raised beds.

It is February and the work is characterised by preparation and anticipation for spring, revolved around clearing the beds, pruning trees and bushes and sowing seeds. Paul tells me that the season is reflected in the numbers of volunteers that attend the sessions, which increases according to the rise in temperature. This turned out to be the case, and during the

season, I got to know around 25 different volunteers and apprentices, with a peak of participants in May and June.

We pass Hannah and Saleh, two of the regular volunteers I became very well acquainted with, squatting on each side of the bed with plants from last year's harvest. Immersed in a conversation while pulling out dead and decaying plants from the porous soil, they were working and talking in a fast pace. I overheard Saleh talking about "cool projects working with forest gardening down at the marches" and Hannah replying that "foraging can possibly become very important in these dire times". Despite the heated exchange of opinions and information, I could tell that it was the mutual interest and enthusiasm, and not disagreement, which caused the intensity.

Amy and I simply said a short "hi" to Hannah and Saleh, both smiling at their eagerness, while we kneeled down on each side of the raided bed further down with a bucket each. I watched her hands move gently around the salad plants to carefully hold them back in order to reach the decaying leaves underneath. Soon enough the black and moist soil appeared underneath the layer of leaves and with a deep breath through her nose Amy exclaim: "Ah – it is the smell of spring!" We both agree that spring was finally upon us and the atmosphere is relaxed and positive as Amy tells me about herself.

Figure 5: Conversations over a bed, Allan's Garden, Hackney

It was the event of reading a book about consumption of food in the city of London that prompted what she now explained as a keen interest in the practice of growing food – something she wanted to devote more time and effort into. She searched the Internet for volunteering opportunities and came across the gardens of Growing Communities, which she could reach easily on her bicycle, and now, Monday was her regular volunteer day. With a small garden of her own, she would like to learn some skills to develop her own edible garden, as well as enjoying gardening and being outside. “I prefer to do something, you know, to just go for a walk is nice, but it just isn’t enough. I kind of need to do something, and I love to work with plants. It feels good, after a day like this, it feels like I have done something meaningful”.

Educated as a human geographer she had a permanent position working for the city council, but tired of her job, she had decided on a sabbatical year, trying to find a new path in life. She had just moved in with her boyfriend and had fewer expenses, which made her financially able to sustain time off her job. Amy also volunteered at an organic café in Camden, and I went to see her a couple times in her lunch break. It was a small café, somewhat off the tourist track, so Amy explained that they were aiming for office-workers and the lunch time rush. Despite how the job at the café was challenging, she enjoyed it a lot. “It is so different, working with real people and not just people on pieces of paper [referring to her old job]. And we get so much positive feedback from customers on our organic profile, that I find it really rewarding”, Amy explained to me. Now that her sabbatical year was drawing close to an end she had decided on not returning to her job in the council, but to work part time at the café managing arrangements with suppliers of the organic procurements. Despite how she would earn considerable less than she did before, she explained that she could not go back to her job, that her only wish was to be able to sustain a life working in the café, volunteering with Growing Communities and with time set up her own garden of vegetables and greens.

To grow vegetables with other people was something that proved to be a much needed and welcomed break with what Amy described as her “common life”, as it proved to be more “meaningful”. Considering her use of the word meaningful, it could at first glance imply that what she does outside the garden is not meaningful. However, I do not think that is the case. For Amy it was one event in relation to others that made her question meaning and value in her life differently that what she did before this defining moment in time. Nonetheless, it did seem like her life had already begun to move in a direction that made her choice of acting

upon these defining moments easier – for example, how she had moved in with her boyfriend. He made it financially possible, but he was also likely to support her in her decisions. Amy shaped her intentions further, and new attachments forged in concrete dealings with gardening and growing, as well as interaction with organic farmers and producers. Events of different characters generated new trajectories of life and actions pertaining to this change, which is why she speaks of a "new life". What started out as an interest, turned into a deeply felt engagement for Amy, which then altered her processes of becoming and being in London. As I will show in other examples throughout the thesis, this was a common chain of events for people attracted to urban agriculture, especially for those whose life became saturate by their engagement.

Later on that day, I also got to work with Hannah on what Paul described as "rescuing the baby salad" in one of the raised beds, which yet again provided me with a possibility for exploring motivations and events leading up to why Hannah came to volunteer. The seedlings of salad had been planted out in pairs rather than one at a time and Hannah, being an experienced gardener, showed me how to pull the plants apart without ruining the roots. While carefully lifting out the plants, soaking the roots in water to ease the separation and then replanting them separately in the bed, we talked about ourselves.

For Hannah, the act of volunteering at farms and in community gardens had become a "life changing experience". She told me about her stressful twenties spent working as a manager in commercial music industry, always on the move and pressed for time. Unhappy and looking for a way out, she did not know what direction to take, but she spotted a position working as an apprentice on a bio-dynamic farm, about an hour drive north of central London, and jumped at the opportunity. Hannah explained that she didn't know at the time that this was what she wanted to devote her life to. But after a whole year on that farm, being so close to nature and animals, she said that she couldn't go back. "It released an inner urge inside me, in my heart, and in my head, and in my stomach for being outside working the land and growing food", I remember her say.

The change Hannah describes in her was projected on her actions after she returned to London. Working part-time as a consultant to set up urban agricultural projects in Greater London, as well as volunteering with Growing Communities once a week, she considered herself part of positive changes about to happen in London. For Hannah, it was important to arrange her life according to her wish to work with agriculture in London, and not to go back

to her job in the music industry. Alike Amy she wanted to work part-time to make room for volunteering in the garden, but still have enough money to continue living in Hackney. In general it is possible to see a pattern of resourceful people that had made some kind of break with their jobs or structure in life – and then chose a life with less financial means and less stability. However, I find their claim for a break between their "new" and "old" life too absolute. I rather propose that it was a shift in what they chose to put more effort into, and with that, the garden became a place of harmony and wellbeing in "their new life". Despite how the words "new" and "old" were used and clear lines were drawn between past and present lives, I think that features of their past lives cannot be completely discerned from how they chose to live their present lives. Both Hannah and Paul were integrated in the music industry; in which traits such as creativity and innovation, to the extent as being "alternative", are considered valuable. Thus, to step out of that arena and into the urban agricultural movement may not be such a grand step, as none of them mentioned social sanctions from friends or colleagues when changing their course of life. Amy was, moreover, a human geographer working with city development and use of urban spaces, thus to develop an interest in sustainable uses of city spaces is not baffling. A more nuanced way of describing their new life might be how they had re-established themselves without what they had experienced as troubling aspects of their lives, such as Hannah who were burnt out and Amy that felt her job to be meaningless. One could also draw parallels to the shifting urban sphere they were living in: the process of gentrification and alternation of urban space opens up for new becoming and emergent realities in which it is fairly easy to become a part of.

Urban agriculture draws attention to "reconnection to nature and dealings with nature" as well as with ones neighbours through "authentic and direct action" of cultivating the soil. This sense of reconnection and authenticity is so strong that Amy and Hannah decided to leave their past occupations and way of life behind, and engage in new practices and relations that generate a new sense of awareness to their everyday life in London. It is in that intersection, when the natural is invoked as an ideological and metaphorical schema for the interpretation of reality and concrete dealings with materiality – or the products of nature – that events emerges to the extent that it is acted upon (Hinchliffe and Whatmore 2006: 133).

Sensing the shift between the city and the garden

As depicted in the ethnographic section of the chapter, when entering the garden the mixed, noisy and busy material surroundings of the city of London, and the area of Stoke

Newington, are altered. The controlled appearance of the city with bricks, concrete and perfected lines change to a green space filled with vibrant colours, a variation of fragrances, plants and trees. These sensory dimensions of the garden proved to be fundamental for understanding the attraction for volunteering and the will to invest time in the community garden, an observation supported by previous research done on English gardeners (Dengen 2009; Tilley 2009). The people I met in relation to urban agriculture would frequently speak of the joy of feeling the sun on their face, smelling apple blossoms, letting the soil run through the hands, tasting the bitter mustard leaves or the sweet chocolate basil. The participants in the community garden would further emphasise the changes in pace and experience of one's body and body movements, often contrasted with the city outside the garden. The pace would slow down, the movements became more profound and calm and people were conscious of how their body responded to the work – bending down over a bed or using force while turning the compost. Despite how the work would be physically demanding at times, I would seldom hear someone complain – rather statements about how they "felt" and how their body reacted on the work. These would not be described as good or bad, but came across as reflections and wonder as opposed to complaints.

Returning to Hannah and her acquired life-style she explained that the sensuous and emotional needs were decisive for why she made time for volunteering. Further, she talks about the changes in her body, how ten years of back problems were gone and that she had lost two stones of weight just from farming and "eating proper food". To reflect on, and to acknowledge the feelings and sensations that arose with working in the garden became a repetitive subject for conversation, and further exemplified in the practices attended. The touch of the hands, for instance, were important, as many procedures were delicate and demanded attention through "feeling ones way". In contrast, many procedures were messy and rough, such as preparing a bed with soil, compost and manure. Nevertheless, the feel and touch, or to "get your hands dirty", were valued experiences that most of the participants did not wish to miss out on by, for instance, wearing gloves that were available on loan. Paul would even mention during the introductory course how he preferred to work without, as it gave him more control of what he was doing. Much of the weeding, harvesting, sowing and watering needed examination by the naked hands – to make sure that one pulled out weeds and not food, to cut of the plant at the proper length, to place the tiny seeds far enough in the soil, and to make sure that the soil was not too wet or dry before doing so.

People enhanced the noises in the garden – or, rather the lack of noise – as a positive experience. Despite the odd sound from outside the garden, such as the occasional road constructions, there was nothing to cause noise in a mechanic or "unnatural" way. This was reflected on how the garden would frequently be described as "quiet", "peaceful", "stillness", "muted", especially when describing the garden in contrast to the city. Sometimes, there would be disturbances, and the actual stillness of the garden would become apparent and made into a subject. One volunteer session I was working with Saleh and one of the neighbouring houses underwent redecorating, which caused quite a lot of noise. After some time working accompanied with the intense sound of a chainsaw, Saleh lifted his head and said with an annoyed, but light tone of voice: "It feels wrong, you know, all that noise – the silence [in the garden] is such a joy. It is like London is on mute and you get really focused on being here". How the city is "put on mute" can be understood as an acknowledgement of the city as still playing, but silenced and pushed away for the sake of the experiences in the garden. The contrast to the busy city surroundings was also noticeable in how one would ease into a calm way of speaking and acting when inside the garden volunteering. It was often a humorous atmosphere in the garden as the volunteers would make jokes, and one would laugh and have fun. However, this would seldom result in loud outbreaks of laughter or talk – it was as if there was an unspoken rule of maximum volume when speaking. One would not be told this, and if one did make a loud remark, it would not be seen as a problem, it was as if people simply adjusted down their pace and volume when working in the garden. Midday, at typical volunteer sessions, the garden would be humming with conversations between the participants, despite that there would be little noise.

In regards to the garden, it is the body and sensitivity towards how the body reacts and meets the material world that I consider important. Apart from the irrigation system of perforated hoses placed in the beds with water running through them from the tap, no other mechanical tools or machines were used. How Saleh says that "it feels wrong" to hear the chainsaw in the garden refers to how machines and tools were not to be a part of the expectations of the sensuous experience of the garden. The absence of machines implied that heavy labour had to be performed in pairs and that one had to use one's body and hands to perform the tasks correctly. In these performances, efficiency was not the measure of success. Rather, it was the ability to care and mend for the plant, its growth and wellbeing that the volunteers put forward as important. I consider this corporal way of relating to urban agriculture to imply that engagements and becomings are bodily matters as much as cognitive ones. The

contingency of the body as lived formations of time and space – or in this sense – of chains of events and choice of activities shape emergent realities (Farquhar 2006: 149). To think the body in this case, will be to engage the body in all its visceral and sensuous elements as entangled and enmeshed, acting and being acted upon in the world (Spyer 2006: 125). Thus are emotions, sensations and sentiments necessary aspects that add to the activities of urban agriculture and produces on-going engagement, as well as acknowledgement of engagement from others (Pink 2011: 346).

In regards to these depictions of sensuous experiences in the garden – such as smell, sound and touch – I consider it helpful to take a quick look at the notion of *intersensorality*, as sensory sequences establish impressions of a place and its materiality (Howes 2006: 165). We can connect the strands of perception in various ways – sometimes working together to form a harmonic image, other times will sensations be conflicted or confused. According to David Howes, "senses are typically ordered in hierarchies", and thus, one form of sensuous experiences is valued in opposition towards other (2006: 164). The sensuous experiences induced when I entered the garden are dependent on that shift from sensuous experiences of the city. I found the garden to be considered a secluded space – different and in many cases in stark contrast to the surrounding city, thus valued higher than sounds and sensuous experiences that are typically urban. The acts of cultivating the soil intrigued feelings of authenticity, and was put forward as a way of combating experiences of urban estrangement through a more direct and unmediated contact with the materiality of the city and its urban nature. I argue that through the sensuous sequence of moving from the city and onto the garden, meanings are conveyed and experienced as sensory shifts, in which the experience of the urban environment changes.

I find that this emphasis of shifts in sensuous experiences, and lack of mediating objects, brings forward an image of the garden as natural and authentic in opposition to the city as un-natural and unauthentic. In both Hannah and Amy's explanation, they refer to deep sensations and "needs", implying a likeness to natural instincts or embodied knowledge. A comment made by Shaun, one of the apprentices, further brings force to my observation: "It's not what we are meant to do, living like this – in a world of bricks and asphalt". To live in the city was not considered an authentic way of life, while to work with growing organic matter was seen as a more in terms with what humans were born to do. To make the constructed world of the city more authentic and more manageable, urban agriculturalists sought reconnection with

urban nature and a creative use of ones surroundings (Bartlett 2005). The difference between the city and the garden can be seen as a difference between dirty and clean, in which the garden provides the participants with a sense of cleansing or purification. The act of gardening and the collaborative effort of working the soil would in many cases be referred to as experiences likened that of catharsis and regeneration. Nonetheless, I emphasise that the garden is not categorically set apart as clean for a dirty city, but that the sensuous shift contains the potential for meaning and value, in which the garden is mostly projected as positive. Through establishing a mode for interacting with the city that engaged novel modes of social relationships, the people engaged in urban agriculture felt more empowered as city dwellers, and a sense of place was invoked.

Working towards connections – the notion of taskscape

Considering the concept of place-making, it will be possible to see the clear connection between the work, social interaction and imagination as constitutive acts (Grey 2000; Ingold 2000; Tilley 1994). Imagination and meanings does not just layer over a pre-existing landscape, because, for people involved in the gardening initiatives, the social and political connections are immediate and compelling. Instead, stories emerge from and impact upon the way in which places come to be — the material and the narrative are all mixed up in the making of places (Dooren and Rose 2012: 2). Identification with place, a specific locality, or a bed of plants from seeds that someone has sowed, intersects with identification of the entire garden, the neighbourhood, the city and wider concerns (Hassel 2005: 93). To seek a better understanding of how cohesion of social relations and social organisation is established in the garden, I find it relevant to look at how the actual contact is initiated and established between the participants. I suggest an analysis of the types of social relations implicated in the process of cultivating the soil, that is, the actual labour that one needs to do while volunteering. Practice and perception, as Ingold (2000) observes, develops side by side, but I will also add the element of sociality and how that develops through practice and perception. The initial contact amongst the volunteers, the apprentices and the paid workers are made through working together. As mentioned, some tasks would be physically demanding and need the collaborative effort of more than one to accomplish, and to work together on solving tasks was the primary mode of labour. Attending to these tasks together created a sense of camaraderie between the participants that provided grounds for them to trust one another and open up for personal contact. One way of understanding the social interaction that occurs of working together is through the concept of *taskscape.*

Taskscape is a socially constructed space of human activity, and I understand it as having spatial boundaries and delimitations for the purposes of analysis. Of key importance, is that taskscape, as well as landscape, needs to be regarded as perpetually in process rather than in a static or otherwise immutable state. Ingold specifies: "Thus temporality and historicity are not opposed but rather merge in the experience of those who, in their activities, carry forward the process social life. Taken together, these activities make what I shall call the taskscape (…)" (2000: 194). More so, the temporality of taskcsape is social, not because society provides an external frame against which particular tasks finds independent measure, but because people, in the performance of the task, also attend to one another (Ingold 2000: 196). I noticed that by watching, listening, would feel each other's presence in the social environment, at every moment adjusting their movements in response to this on-going perceptual monitoring. This informs the notion of how bodily engagement with the world is better described not as an "inscription" of the living body onto the material world, but rather a phenomenon of in-corporation – suggesting a deep embedding of the human body in the world through *experience*. This allows an appreciation of the way in which landscape becomes through us as a result of hands-on activities of everyday life.

> "I think I learnt all there was to learn the first couple of months – but, you know, it is nice being there – gardening and chatting with people with similar ideas as me. It feels like I know more people in my neighbourhood through volunteering in the garden the past six months than I ever did the past ten years that I have been living in the area. It is the package, you know, of both the political part and the social bit that keeps me going every week." Saleh, recorded conversation.

Saleh claims that the social component of volunteering is essential for him to return to the garden, in combination with how the garden provides him with an arena to meet like-minded people. The idea of the taskscape recognises that performances are interlocking, and that one performance is embedded in the way other performances occur (Ingold 2000: 193). Social relations are forged in action and woven into gardening practice and knowledge as gardens mediate sociability amongst neighbours, kin and friends as spaces for circulation of plants, seeds, advice, services, knowledge, values and people (Dengen 2009: 152). It is almost a cliché to suggest that attachments are forged between people and growing plants as responsibility and care for the seedlings and samplings are paramount in cultivation practices. Perhaps a less telluric way of expressing this is to say that these shared embodiments of people and things heighten awareness (Hincliffe and Whatmore 2006: 133).

Figure 6: Preparing the soil for new plants

However, I acknowledge that this kind of coherency is not pre-given, but dependent on the particular orderings of that time in space as well as the actors involved (Hincliffe and Whatmore 2006: 134). Practice take shape and shape the actors involved, either in a way that contributes to them returning – or deciding not to. I consider Paul, and how he performs his role as the Head Grower as of vital importance to the structural set up of the volunteer sessions, as well as how his gentle personality affects the atmosphere of the volunteer sessions. He allows people to look at the list and make their own suggestions on what they want to do, and according to him this is to avoid that volunteers who come every week end up doing the same job every time they are there, as well as a way to avoid people performing work they are not physically able to do. In this sense the volunteers experience that their needs and wishes were taken into consideration, and that they are acknowledged as important contributors in the work of cultivating the garden. Paul would moreover make an effort of pairing people up on the different tasks that needed doing, a deliberate act he admitted: "Most of the things that need doing are a one-person job, but you know, people like to get something else out if volunteering than simply the work. I want to make sure that people enjoy themselves while they are here so that they wish to return. And to make people work together has proved to be successful" (recorded conversation). Through working together people had to communicate in order to solve the task – which provided many opportunities for further conversations and sense of partnership. In learning skills and skilled use of one's body, their bodies attuned themselves towards one another for interaction, both verbal and

non-verbal (Ingold 2000: 196). Nonetheless, it was the conversations that came out of these collaborative work-sessions that truly caught me by surprise and intrigued my anthropological mind. It was as if the work became a catalyst for talk and to find myself in quite personal conversations in which sharing intimate details with people I did not know well, became a rule rather than an exception. Attachments forge themselves in action, and these same actions shape intentions – hence, doing the garden are complex and entangled processes of becoming and being (Hinchliffe and Whatmore 2006: 133).

Sensing place in the garden

It is beyond doubt that I speak the garden in singular when describing the material location, but I also recognise how the garden contains a multitude of different conceptions of *meaningful place.* These conceptions are built on personal *imagining*s about how urban agriculture should and could be, pertaining to personal conceptions of meaningful practice and relations in the garden, but also beyond the garden gate and dealings with urban agriculture (Bubandt and Roepstorff 2003: 13). The point of departure here is that it is not only a rational understanding of the forms of significance the garden have that motivate specific actions in the garden, but also an emotional attachment to the landscape and its dwellers. As Bubandt and Roepstorff observes: "once established, particular imaginings of nature become moral realities that affect local practices and identity as well as scientific knowledge practices" (2003: 15). Budbandt and Roepstorff uses the human activity of imagining when analysing human engagement with nature – arguing that it is a particular form of practice that affects how one relates to the landscape, place and other living entities (ibid). Analysing reflections and articulations of this process, I will also make use of imagining as an overarching metaphor for notions about present concerns and future risk. Accordingly will imagining not simply suggest a conceptualisation of what is or might be out there, but it implies an attempt at render an idea real by making it a model for future action. In other words, imagining entails a model *of* as well as a model *for* reality, to paraphrase Geertz' dictum (Budbandt and Roepstorff 2003: 15). To do urban agriculture are more than cognitive rational actions, as it confirms and motivates engagement through sensuous experiences. I argue that particular imaginings and notions of urban nature, city, and individual responsibility begin to motivate actions once it gains a significant emotional motivating component. In this way imagining becomes more than simply grasping the conceptualisation of what is out there, it also implies an attempt at render an idea real by making it a model for future action. Another way to see it is that the garden becomes a proto-

space; an example of how urban space can be turned into sustainable places for conviviality and food production – a model of what is possible today, and a model for a desired and achievable future.

I find the theory of place compatible with the idea of a garden as meaningful in different ways and with different consequences for various actors – as a result I recognise the volatile feature of place and place-making. Confirming to these observations, Bartlett includes the dimension of diversity of actors and their potentially conflicting interests and actions as prominent features of place-making (2005:92). Dependent on practices and relations between humans and materiality, time and space through a gathering process, spatial and textual stories become embedded in one another (Pink 2008:179). Human-being-in-the-world is fundamentally a being-in-place. We are always somewhere, in some location that is actively and constitutively perceived through the body's senses and movements so that the places we inhabit inherently contours and meanings for us (Gray 2000:7). Acknowledging the non-fixity of place, I conceptualise place as a form of constantly changing event, but not so contingent that it is elusive (Pink 2008: 166). Despite how taking part as a volunteer in the garden serves different purposes for the variation of the actors involved – the garden is constituted as a place that exists in material practice, as well as in the memories, imaginings and discourses beyond the garden gate. I ensue that this occurs as mediation between imagination and practical enactment of the garden (Bubandt and Roepstorff 2003: 15). The garden as a place owes its character to the experiences it affords to those who spend time there – to the sights, sounds and indeed smells that constitute its specific ambience. And these, in turn, depend on the kinds of activities in which its participants engage, and in what manner they dwell in the landscape (Ingold 2000: 192). The volunteer sessions are an activity compressed in time and space – never the same despite similar features and routinized activities. I argue that it is from this relational context of people's engagement with the garden and their environment that place draws its unique significance, for each individual and for a network of people engaged in urban agriculture.

For Amy, it was a practical way to research a newly gained interest, as well as an enjoyable outdoors activity that she experiences as pleasing to her senses through touch, smell and the physical activity of getting her "hands dirty". Yet again, for Hannah, the volunteering was part of a wider lifestyle concerning urban gardening and alternative food production. What had started as an "inner urge" and continued into "a deep and heartfelt fascination of working

the soil and growing food and eating delicious home grown seasonal food", had further developed into a political devotion for protecting land, proliferating the claim for better access to organic, and locally grown food for all – also in the city. I find that they had in common, as do the majority of the ones involved largely in urban agriculture, an intention to achieve a complementary lifestyle of green engagements, hinging on the image of a sustainable self. In order to underpin my argument about the complimentary green and sustainable lifestyle, I will make use of Paul and how he narrates his life.

Living the complementary London life

For the Head Grower Paul to be in the garden was his occupation – a paid job of running the volunteer sessions, training apprentices and producing a crop of salad, as well as a part of a lifestyle that he was pleased to have established in London. Through several conversations throughout the fieldwork, I learnt that Paul had spent his twenties squatting in different buildings across East-London, as well as engaging in different anti-capitalistic movements. As his twenties proceeds he was involved in the music industry, before pursuing his wish to work with gardening and set up a one-man company mending private gardens. However, as it did not prove financially viable and too stressful, and he became dependent on a stable structure of life as he had settled down with his girlfriend and eight months ago fathered a son, he put it down. Thus, he applied for the position as head grower for Growing Communities and with a pleased tone in his voice, he said the position provided the financial means to sustain a family as well as being in line with his wish to be a full time horticulturalist. The past ten years he had managed an allotment where he grew his supply of vegetables and he had been educated in permaculture design at the famous Schumacher College in Devon.[7] He had long thought about leaving the city and move to the countryside to get a proper garden and even set up a small enterprise growing organic vegetables for sale, but when he got the position as a head Grower the wish for country life subsided. Moreover, he describes his movement through a landscape, which he values due to its "natural" characteristics and likeness to the countryside:

> "I mean, it feels a bit like I already live on the countryside. I travel by bike along the river Lea, through the marshes and up to the garden most days of the week and then I get to be outside working with the soil and even earn money doing it. I sort of avoid the intense London life and enjoy the good parts, so I don't really feel the need to move." (recorded conversation)

[7] A private college that teach permacultural design and organic agriculture.

To be engaged in small scale food production was a prominent wish in Paul's life, and even made him consider leaving his London life in favour of a rural lifestyle. However, he managed to reconcile his urban life in London, where he had most of his friends and his contacts in the music industry, and his enjoyment of nature. He and his girlfriend had a band, so he were still oriented towards the music industry for opportunities to play and make music, which he was reluctant about giving up – a likely consequence of moving out of London. Despite having a university degree, he had never had a "regular" job and often spoke about how he could not bear the thought of having to spend time working in an office space. To be able to pursue an occupation and a lifestyle based upon regular engagement with the nature-like features of London was expressed as both a consequence of him not being able to work behind a desk, and as a result of inner needs and wishes. Paul had managed to compliment his life through practices where he was able to sustain a family and a life in the city, while engaging in practices more related to rural living. I see that as means of complementarity the city was not ignored, but creatively made use of for Paul to fulfil his needs and wishes, and to become emplaced (Pink 2008: 167).

The past arguments brings forth the slightly contradicting notion of how these urban dwellers would actively seek out practices and places that could be considered a negation of the urban, while hardly anyone wanted to leave the city. Their lives were revolved around practices and relations in London – it was their homes and where their families and friends lived, and the material context for emotional attachments. I would more so say that the people I met in relation to urban agriculture did indeed like to live in the city. They liked to attend typical urban activities such as concerts with famous bands, drinking coffee on a sidewalk café, and meet up with friends at short notice at the local club. Many even claimed to like the crowded and busy London, such as Hannah, who underlined the positive effect of living in cohabiting households to the company of people her own age. Thus, the urban agriculturalists did not experience the notion of being alienated from the city of their city-lives – they were more concerned with how to complement their life more in line with attentiveness to the natural. I argue that to establish modes of living that enabled this complementarity was of paramount importance and something that they to a large extent managed to do, not in spite of the city, but to a large extent because of the city. Barlett also sees community gardens as a way for urban dwellers to seek contact with the natural world, and through that effort establish themselves in the city. Through urban reconnections with nature dimensions of place

intersect and build on each other, joining perception of the natural world with the built environment, and imagining with action (2005: 52).

Summary

In this chapter, I have provided the reader with an insight into the practical, material, social, sensuous and emotional aspects of the community garden in Stoke Newington. More so, I have linked this with ideas about how the fusion of garden practices with personal biographies, future notions and actual material practice. This has further enabled me to assert a concept of the garden as a place, brought into being in time and space by the notion of sensations. If we accept this notion of place, however, an important question remains before us, namely, who narrates (in active voices) these places? Whose stories come to matter in the emergence of a place (Dooreen and Rose 2012:1)? And what consequences will variation in awareness have on the relations and practices forged in the garden? In the following chapter, I will investigate this awareness and show how this was not evenly distributed. I will, furthermore, dig into how these weavings of social relations into different practices and relations continue to shape the network of urban agriculture.

4 Growing Selves – Contested Gardening

> *War is the natural occupation of man, war – and gardening.*
>
> Winston Churchill, 1918

In the previous chapter, I have emphasised tranquillity and communion in the urban garden, whilst in the following chapter, I will turn the attention to processes of differentiation, inclusion and seclusion, as well as ethical dilemmas and ideological affiliations. The purpose of applying such a perspective is to investigate the dialectic processes of shaping and experimenting places, which further shape identity, belonging, and group cohesiveness. I will use of Clifford Geertz' conceptual distinctions of deep and shallow play to reveal the differences and variations within the network of urban agriculture in London. Despite how these terms are used for the sake of analysis, and not to propose a clear cut separation of actors into two opposing categories, the notion of deep and shallow play are well suited to demonstrate the different modes for engaging in urban agriculture. It does not contradict my assertion of cohesion in the garden, and it will be possible to show how I consider the garden as a place of being and becoming (Hinchliffe and Whatmore 2006: 127). I find the garden to be a generative space – for flexible engagement, but also for processes of institutionalisation and establishments. This occurs through negotiations of relations and practice, of which we will see expressed through the collaborative labour of cultivating the soil.

Cutting the slug

It was early on in the fieldwork as Paul approached me and asked me if I would mind doing a "slug patrol". This kind of patrol meant searching through the beds that had the appearance of recently being part of someone's meal to look for slugs, which upon discovery we were supposed to cut in two with a pair of secateurs. He seemed to watch my response closely when asking this and it felt different from the other times when he asked me to perform a task, more hesitant in a way. I did not think more of it at the time and assured him that despite finding the procedure somewhat disgusting, I had no objections against the patrolling. Paul seemed relieved, and I got on with the job.

A couple of weeks later the slug patrolling once again became an issue when I overheard Paul asking Saleh, one of the regular volunteers to do the patrolling. Saleh is of Indian

decent, something Paul was aware of, and Paul asked directly if killing the slugs would be an issue concerning his religious beliefs, thinking Saleh was a Buddhist. Saleh laughed and said that he was a Muslim actually, and that he could not remember any prohibition against slug slaying in the Koran. Once again, Paul looked relieved and laughed at Saleh's comment, and the atmosphere was joyful and content again. This hesitant way of asking the volunteers about doing slug patrol made it quite evident that Paul was sensitive towards how killing the slugs might be difficult or in a way offensive for some. Moreover, he seemed uncertain or irresolute concerning the treatment of the slugs and more than once commented on how horrible and disgusting it was and how it left the garden smelling of decaying slugs rather than the nice plants and herbs we were growing.

Around March, the apprentices started working in the gardens, and the issue of the treatment of slugs escalated in different ways. The apprentices work without pay alongside the growers to gain the necessary practical insight and knowledge as to be educated as "organic urban farmers" by the end of season. I had already spent two months volunteering in the garden and noticed how their presence in different ways added to the dynamics in the gardens. All of the apprentices had experience from small-scale food growing before, and they were concerned with the issues of food, food security, land use and activism in general. Even though they went through education and in some ways did not perform their tasks much differently from the volunteers, their familiarity with the practices made them more independent than the volunteers. Moreover, I noticed that the tutor-apprentice relationship that were established between Paul and the apprentices, seemed to force Paul to reflect on the work he did in the gardens, as there now was someone who did not only ask what to do, but insisted on knowing the reasons and intentions behind his instructions. Indeed, most volunteers did ask why they were set out to perform a task in a certain way. However, their roles as novices were more established. With their knowledge, the apprentices had the potential to question Paul's authority and set out to do things in the garden without the direction of Paul. I saw no signs of Paul taking any offense by this, and he kept up the pleasant and cheerful mood from the days before the attendance of the apprentices. Nonetheless, a new mode of social dynamics took shape in the garden, based upon the advantages the apprentice had in terms of skills and their outspoken knowledge about organic farming and the societal implications urban agriculture could or should have. The notion of *joint mission* had been the key generative component for social cohesion amongst the volunteers and the employees during the volunteer session, but due to the entry of the apprentices, another mode of social organisation

surfaced (Amit and Rapport 2012: 6). Amongst the apprentices as well as some of the other volunteers that had an all-compassing devotion towards urban agriculture, such as Hannah, Saleh and Amy, I found them to share a sense of belonging to what I describe as a Durkhemian notion of *moral community*. In this moral community, the protection of life, both human and non-human, expressed itself as of paramount importance, something that became obvious in specific dealings with creatures in the garden, and further as self-imposed dietary restrictions. I also argue that their moral community expanded into a practice of piecing together a complimentary lifestyle in line with their moral and ideological beliefs, an argument I will return to below.

Paired up with one of the apprentices, Sarah, we were chatting a bit whilst dealing with the overgrown rocket in one of the raised beds. At one point, I found a slug and quickly reached for my secateurs, firmly cut it in half accompanied by a Sarah gasping for air and her proclaiming: "Oh, you're one of those – a cutter!" I was taken aback by her reaction and asked her what she meant, and at this point she was laughing while explaining her issues with the "slaughter of slugs that occurred in the garden". With a smile, she expressed that she was not mad at me, but that she was a vegan and opposed to the killing of all living beings, including the slugs. She would rather collect the slugs and let them loose on the other side of the fence, as she said it made her sleep better at night. Nonetheless, she further explained that she was aware that she was likely to pick up the same slug and do the procedure many times over, as slugs would certainly not let a fence stop them in their quest for a delicious feast of kale or lettuce. She did not react aggressively and made an effort in relating her comment to her moral concerns about how to treat living beings; nonetheless, the label of 'cutter' did not feel particularly attractive. It made me think about the practice of killing the slugs, and the way that practise were an object for debate.

I confessed my thoughts to Paul, and he quickly replied that he was in a confused state as well: "The slugs are such a problem, we lose about 20% of the crop every year to the stomach of slugs, but there is little to do to prevent them. I mean, we have arranged a feast of delicacies here in the garden, what is there to expect besides hordes of slugs that want to take a nibble." He later added that he was simply continuing a procedure his predecessor had taught him to do and with Sarah's latest objections, he had come reflect on the slug patrol.

Maybe it was heartfelt reluctance towards killing the slugs, or it might have been the force of Sarah's resistance – I do not know. However, a week later, Paul came back from what he

called “a creative visit” to Growing Communities’ sister organisation, Organic Lea, and enthusiastically imposed a new method for control of the slugs – beer-traps. He placed small cups filled with beer in each bed, as slugs appear attracted to the smell of beer. “In this way at least they will die happy. And it works, look how many slugs it has captured during the past week”, Paul exclaimed as he pointed to one of the cups with a rather greyish content of beer and more or less dissolved slugs. He had set up the traps during the weekend to monitor their effect up until the volunteer session, and he seemed more than pleased with the result. Paul’s comment about how the slugs would die happy could simply be a joke, but this comment and his actions opened up for a shift in his relation to the slugs. His comment implies that the slug has an emotional life and the possibility of being either happy or sad, something that was not a subject before Sarah’s reactions.

When Sarah saw the beer-traps, she put up a disgusted look and exclaimed that she could not face the task of emptying the traps. Despite Paul’s effort, Sarah still claimed moral superiority through her comments, as well as through her actions. Her opposition against killing slugs became an opposition towards Paul and his implementation of routines, something that could potentially disturb the peace and calm in the garden and amongst the participants.

I consider Paul to be a very gentle person, keen on making everyone comfortable and making sure that we had a good time volunteering. Nonetheless, I found it to be slightly surprising when Paul made a statement the following volunteer session, that he wanted to take Sarah’s lead. Moreover, from that day on he would prefer that we collected slugs in a designated bucket, and that he would make the trip out of the garden and across the road to let them loose at the end of the day. He made the bucket ready with a perforated lid and inside there were leaves and grass for the slugs to feed off during their brief entrapment. The slug patrol practice became quite different than it had started out, now concurring with the vegan’s point of view of how ones task is to protect and cultivate life for everything and everyone. I find the slug to be a part of the moral community mentioned in one of the previous paragraphs, thus in need of protection and respect.

Figure 7: The bucket for collecting slugs and snails, Allan's Garden, Hackney

I think it is fair to say that Paul did change his perspective towards the slugs. However, my impression was that his decision to stop the killing completely was in effect more a concern for stabilising relations than the slug in its self. Sarah's reactions could cause disharmony and antagonism between the participants in the gardens, feelings that I claim Paul could not allow for in the garden, as it might cause people to feel uncomfortable and to stop coming. Paul had moreover made an effort in exercising his power in a subtle way – never confronting and always building up under the sense of joint effort rather than him commanding tasks to be done. I find his egalitarian approach to leadership decisive for the atmosphere in the garden, and much of the reason why the garden became a therapeutically space in the city that many felt the need to retreat to. Nonetheless, he had to strive towards fulfilling concrete requirements from Growing Communities of amount of production in order for them to consider the garden as viable. The slugs were a threat to that, but so was lack of volunteers and helping hands. Thus, Paul had to thread a careful line of securing a rate of production and keeping up a pleasant and comfortable atmosphere for labour. As Hinchliffe and Whatmore observes in their study of urban conservationist groups in Birmingham, UK: "Means and ends are often blurred, either or can change shape as intentions develop in the course of working out a procedure" (2006: 132). Intentions take shape in action, and I consider that Paul was forced to act, but that he did so in a quiet and non-aggressive way that came across as reasonable for everyone involved, so that the procedures could change without it raising a debate among the rest of the volunteers and apprentices.

Gardening as protection of life

I see that protection of the non-human realm will be determined by what is considered worthy of life, something that will vary in relation to how strongly the participants of urban agriculture perceived urban space as a bounty of life, or as a space that is given life when humans interferes (Hinchliffe and Whatmore 2006). It became clear that Sarah found killing the slugs deeply in conflict with her notions of value of life and protection of nature, while Paul and I approached the slug pragmatically. We focused on securing the conditions for growth for the edible plants and the slugs were a threat, which we needed to get rid of. In Sarah's opinion, the slug had every right to be there, as the plants or the humans, and a death sentence for following its wish for a full stomach was too harsh of a punishment. Hence, I argue for a description of the slug as a determining factor in the relation between Sarah and me, Paul and Sarah, and Paul's relations towards slugs in general. Sarah's immediate response to my treatment of the slug was to place me in a category she opposed, and made a point of distancing herself from my actions and the likes of me. In a triangular relation between myself, Sarah, and the slug, I became "the cutter", the slug "the victim" and Sarah "the imposer of ethics of life". Even though I did not experience being rejected or left out in the aftermath of my actions, her label of me as "a cutter" did set me aside and apart from her moral belonging. I consider Sarah's reactions and opposition to follow Paul's procedures a critical event in the sense of Kapferer (2010), with the effect of Paul changing the procedures and his position once again reinforced as a part of the moral community.

Growing Communities, as well as all the other about ten community gardens I was in touch with during the fieldwork, promoted organic farming techniques without the use of petroleum-based pesticides and fertilisers. They asserted organic farming good for the environment, humans, as well as animals and insects, as it was considered sustainable and regenerating. In contrast, conventional farming was to exhaust natural resources, cause environmental damage and destruction of bio-diversity. The protection of bio-diversity was of paramount importance for the urban agriculturalists and the design of the gardens was intentionally done to "promote wildlife". A pond area, flowers and berries, and a "wild side" where everything was left to grow, were thought to increase the activity of insects such as bees and spiders inside the garden. Thus, I found the killing-off of one particular sort of insect due to its high rate of destruction of crops, slightly out of sorts. Furthermore, they put forward the ideological act of promoting organic urban farming as examples, or models, for how humans could live off the soil and in harmony with natural resources – even the city.

The garden as urban nature or an urban space, was not seen by the urban agriculturalists as immutable or inert, but as a natural ecological space, organised in accordance to processes that both included and reached beyond human involvement (Hinchliffe and Whatmore 2006: 124).

The apprentices

Despite how Growing Communities and their gardens attracted a stabile number of volunteers throughout the season, Paul confessed that it was essential to gain a predictable supply of labour, something they achieved through having apprentices working alongside the Head Grower. I found the apprentices' intensity of interest in the garden, as well as how they expressed their moral belonging, as something that added to the atmosphere in the garden, as I tried to make explicit in the example of the slug. As an apprentice, one would work one day a week in the garden, in addition to half-a-day packing salad on Tuesdays at the main office. Apprentices only had available a couple of days off during the six months the apprenticeship lasted, and apart from a free box of vegetables from the box scheme every week, no other payment was given. According to Paul, the apprenticeship scheme was popular with over 25 applications for the four positions in 2012. To go through with the scheme, however, Paul emphasised that one had to be deeply motivated as one would often need to work another paid job along with apprenticing, and many worked six-seven days a week to make ends meet. Apart from working as apprentices, they would for instance have jobs in Growing Communities with handing out boxes for the box scheme, whereas some were employed by a local school to run their school kitchen garden and teach the children, whilst other worked with campaigning for animal rights. Others would simply work at a local café or in a pub, work that they explained as "what I do for money" – excluding it as a practice they did because of enjoyment or a particular interest.

Despite the low payments and the need to work additionally, the apprenticeship was popular, and the apprentices I met were thankful for the opportunity. Sarah explained that it meant something to have Growing Communities as a reference on your CV if you wanted to get paid jobs working with urban agriculture in London, as they gained a lot of respect from others in the network. Thus, to go through with the apprenticeship would ease the task of constitute a complimentary lifestyle of continuing to live and be in in London, and be able to work with urban agriculture and hold a position in the network. As I have mentioned, the apprentices had previous experience with urban agriculture, but they needed to improve their

skills as well as get a "formal proof" of their abilities. Thus, they never excluded the world of sheets and formal papers from the sphere of urban agriculture, something I will investigate further in chapter five.

Returning to the notion of skills, I found that the apprentices' experience allowed them to perform the skills needed in the garden with more ease and confidence than many of the other volunteers. Ingold asserts that skills and practice of techniques are parts of defining one's identity and self-realisation. Further are skills and perception intimately related and that by fostering skills one may also foster perception, in this case a perception of the environment and of the city (2000: 190).[8] The apprentices, as well as a few other regular volunteers, such as Hannah and Amy (as mentioned above), did strive towards a life in London that revolved around alternative food production, as volunteers, but also through paid positions. They lead an active life of attending seminars and open days at various other gardens and places in relation to alternative agriculture and changing the food system – I will return to this in the following chapter. This engagement produced what I have chosen to describe as green identities and green lifestyles – embodying an awareness of environmental risks, rights and responsibilities – which assembled their everyday practices, from the most personal to the most political into a complex whole (Horton 2006: 127). This green lifestyle demanded that one had to make changes in one's own lives, rather than to think that the policymakers would make the effort of establishing sustainable policies. They foregrounded the famous Mahatma Ghandi quote, "be the change you want to see in the world", as a guideline one should attune one's life-styles in accordance to.

I will describe this segment of gents as *deep players*, to paraphrase Geertz, and I use the term as means for contrasting their involvement with the participants who took more lightly to the political implications of urban agriculture – the *shallow players*. Despite how I am reluctant about grouping the actors – as my data cannot account for exact numbers or frequency – I observed what I would describe as two segments of participants, according to intensity of engagement. These were not opposing poles, nor were the division between them clear cut. Nevertheless, with help from Geertz' terms, I group certain variations for the sake of analysis. The shallow players did not have much in common apart from their interest in gardening, whilst the deep players could, to a greater extent, be grouped together due to their commonality. Through playing deep, they would forge what I found to be a perceived

[8] This is indeed the title of Tim Ingold's book, *The Perception of the Envirnoment*, published in 2000

collective identity inscribed through particular behaviours, language, dress and practices that were quite easily distinguishable (Chatterton and Pickerill 2009: 2). I am not saying that they were homogenous, but that they shared some common features that made me observe them as similar. Moreover, it made them able to seek out each other based on visible characteristics. I also found the deep players to experience a collectiveness of shared values and ideas about how to conduct and live one's life, demarcated from other views on the same issues. To convey some of these features will reflect the tale of the slug, and further show how one could play green lifestyles deep.

In using Geertz' distinction and the notion of play, I wish to mention Bruce Kapferer's (1984) critique of how Geertz depicts shallow play as form of disinterest, caused by lack of skills or understanding of the deep play. Kapferer claims that Geertz does not understand the part the shallow players played sufficiently, and rather than seeing deep and shallow play the way Geertz do as "almost independent", a more correct way will be to recognise the interdependence on these to modes of play (Kapferer 1984: 204). Relating to my own "game", I see deep and shallow play as interlocking and that both modes allow for an understanding of the play, but different levels of engagement. This flexibility of engagement is constitutive of the network of urban agriculture in which entities are not involved simply due to their inherent traits, but because of relations to other entities (Myhre: in press). These relations can be both strong and weak (Granoveter 1973), or be played deep or shallow, as we will see in the following analysis.

Playing deep through ideological and political concerns

Sarah was one of the many people I met concerning the garden and other urban agricultural projects that had imposed dietary restrictions. She was a vegan, which meant that she would not eat any meat, egg or dairy. Many vegans does not even eat honey because it is a product of industrial beekeeping, and will not wear clothes made out of wool and other animal parts such as skin and fur. A more common form of dietary restrictions was to be vegetarian, and thus, not eat meat, but still eat egg and dairy, whilst others would be "conscious eaters" in their own rights. To be a conscious eater entailed that one could eat all food categories as long as it was properly sourced, according to principles of organic farming, local production and ethically slaughtered. For people to have some forms of restrictions on what they eat in contemporary London was not that uncommon. However, I found the extent to which some of these people would include eating, consuming and treating animals as part of a larger

ideological project, striking. To restrict consumption and intake of these categories are efficient markers of opposition to the capitalistic food industry, as well as an opposition towards well-established modes of consumption and social organisation (Eder 1996: 135). According to Eder, veganism and vegetarianism function as "a negation of society, [which] seeks to recreate that state of nature in which that paradisiacal coexistence of people and animals still exists" (ibid). I see Sarah's treatment of the slug as an example of her wish to establish a coexistence with the slug – despite the fact that it was not nature in its paradisiacal form that was in question. Rather, it was a piece of land in the midst of the city that humans were actively alternating as means for cultivation of food. Nonetheless, I see her veganism and as a way of confirming her identification with a moral community that promotes restriction towards certain food categories and opposes industrial farming and exploitation of animals and land. In this, will eating and choice of food become a basis for establishing collective identities. Through the incorporation of food into the individual body, one will simultaneously be incorporated into a system of eating, consuming and cooking food based upon certain rules and understandings of the world (Fürst 1996: 62). Differences between the participants in the garden and their concerns with diet, eating and the possible political and ethical implications of consuming food became visible and precarious during the communal lunch.

During the day-long volunteer session, the volunteers, growers and the apprentices would all pause their work around one o'clock to eat together. The lunch became an important part of the day and an established routine, as we planned much of the work in accordance with the break at one o'clock. Food and the shared meal are strongly related to meaning and identity processes as eating can be regarded as a form of taxonomy, or a means for creating order in our environment - both as an individual (I), as part of a group (us), and in relation to the outside world (the others). The act of eating can be an important connection between the self and the world, the individual and society, microcosm and macrocosm (Torjusen et. al 1999: 75-76), as "food is good to think" to paraphrase Claude Levi-Strauss. The taxonomic effect of eating together became prominent during the Monday sessions when we initiated a "food share" amongst the volunteers and other participants of the volunteer session. People would bring courses they made, leftovers from yesterday's dinner, or simply some bread and hummus picked up at the local shop on their way to the garden. Most commonly would the courses be vegan, at least vegetarian, and based around seasonal vegetables, legumes and salads. We were not given any prior notice about the food share, and many were caught by

surprise having brought a ready-made ham and cheese sandwich, which wasn't too attractive to share with the others, or a meaty dish that the many vegans and vegetarians did not eat. Whenever this happened, they never socially sanctioned the person who was not able to share his food, and they still offered him to eat of the food share. Nevertheless, newcomers would show signs of embarrassment and discomfort, and from my own experience: feel somewhat left out. I argue that the distinction of who the group considered a part of this moral community of "correct" eating and the ones who were not, had its explicit expression during the lunch. Vegetarianism became a *regulative symbol* of which rules of social conduct were measured upon. The regulative aspect is not simply a formal statement of creating order, but entails order in its own existence (Krogstad 1986: 515).

Figure 8: Lunch and food share at Allan's Garden, Hackney

Food as a regulative symbol did not simply structure social interaction, but played a part in a discursive order, so to say, that became established through specific food practices. I noticed that the subject of food and good versus bad food would be further articulated in the frequent stories about how the dishes had been made. This was standard procedure during the lunch if someone brought food that involved a particular technique, such as sour dough bread or pickled vegetables. Others would reply with their experiences of baking with a sour dough starter, and then the conversations would continue with a debate concerning the positive effect of this kind of food on the body. Tilley is concerned with how articulations and narratives are symbolic resources drawn on to foster correct social behaviour and values

(1994: 33). Narratives establish bonds between people, but also between people and features of a landscape, such as in this case, the garden and the city of London, creating moral guidance for creativity (ibid). In this case, I found narratives to create bonds between some participants, but also to express distinctions and differences, mainly between the deep and shallow players.

This division of who was included and excluded from the moral community corresponds to the division between deep and shallow players, the shallow ones not playing sufficiently deep to be considered a part of the moralists. Nonetheless, I find it important to underpin that the shallow players were not completely left out as most of them, akin to the deep players, would choose organic food in the shop if it was available and they were familiar with the issues of the food system and about food security. However, I found that the most apparent difference was that they would not go to greater lengths for acquiring organic food if it was not available at their local shop, and they had not gained detailed information about the political or environmental consideration of food production. For the shallow players, organic and local food, as well as the lifestyle of being able to volunteer in the community garden once a week were a *preference*, but not a requirement for a good life in London. It is relevant to point out that many of the shallow players were somewhat older than the apprentices and other deep players, and they would rather express their motivation for volunteering in terms of nostalgia or a need for being outdoors. There were fewer incidents of defining moments leading up to their act of volunteering and more a question of convenience and a less stressful time-schedule. These slightly older (from the age of 45-70 years old) would describe memories about their grandmother, or even their mother, having a kitchen garden, and how they wished to follow their lead in providing their family with home-grown vegetables. They expressed that they considered the ability of growing food lost, and in need of regenerating, something they felt compelled to do. This grouping of shallow players was predominantly female, as opposed to the fairly balanced numbers of both female and male participants in the rest of the garden.

The war-years and Victory gardens, which I have mentioned in the introduction, would moreover become a frequent object for conversations, in this case despite age and gender. It was considered important to be able to provide oneself with food if disaster struck – something they consider possible, even likely, “in these times of austerity” – referring to financial instability and increase in the unemployment rate that the U.K. was experiencing.

The memory or knowledge about the Victory Gardens was common within all age groups, as this is still a part of the public discourse. For instance is the slogan “Dig for Victory” a common feature on posters and signs, as well as in commercials and popular media. I see it as a key symbol in Sherry Ortner’s (1973) sense: As a vehicle for meaning shared by a large group of people. At the main office where they held the pack of salad every Tuesday, they served tea in cups labelled “Dig for Victory”, with the same font as the original posters distributed during the war. Hence, the need to make use of land within the city of London to grow food was not beyond grasp by most people, as personal biographies, social identities and a biography of place are intimately connected. While places and movement between them are intimately related the formation of personal biographies, I say that places themselves can acquire a history, sedimented layers of meaning by virtue of the actions and events that take place in them (Tilley 1994: 27). In London and the U.K., the memory of both the First and the Second World Wars are still an important part of the public discourse – acted out, regenerated and configured through practices of individuals and groups, such as through volunteering in the community garden.

Moving green, living green, being green

As Roepstorff and Bubandt observes: “once established, particular imaginings of nature become moral realities that affect local practices and identity as well as scientific knowledge practices” (2003:13). The players of urban agriculture in London had firmly asserted their notions of what future risks one had to avoid, through implementing certain practices in the city and material configurations of the city. Whenever I went over to Hannah for dinner, it she served a meal of locally sourced and seasonal vegetables, something she pointed out while serving. She had also attempted at alternating her housemates eating habits and held small cooking lessons with vegetables not commonly used in the British diet, such as pak choi, calvo nero and nettles. Next, I want to follow up on Lien’s (2010) demand for attention to the performativity of concepts – the way in which any enactment of ideas is simultaneously constituted and constitutive of the material setting in which it occurs. I will give an account of certain features of the how to play urban agriculture deep, highlighting how they would enact their ideas and perspectives on their every-day urban life. I argue that the deep players make London in their own image through these practices, adhering to their sense of belonging to a moral community, something they confirm through doing the city green. The effect of the attention towards being green in their everyday life in London enforced their claims to green urban life.

Most participants in the garden shared the attraction towards transporting and traveling by bike, but it was enhanced during their interaction with the garden, emphasised by the routines of transport and distribution implemented by Growing Communities. They presented urban agriculture as a part of the answer to the issue of "carbon footprints" and "food miles" – both emic terms used to describe how transport and production based on fossil fuels would cause pollution and carbon emissions. Without the use of petroleum based pesticides and no need for large machines, small-scale urban agriculture could potentially provide city dwellers with as locally produced food as possible. Insisting that transport of tools and necessaries for the garden would occur by bicycle and customised trailers fastened on the bikes, the salad bags would be labelled "Carbon Free Salad" in order to underline the modes of cultivation, packing and distribution. Moreover would the deep players' use of bicycle for transport exceeded the shallow players, as they would use bicycle in all instances – even long distance traveling. I became aware of a general opposition to the use of helmet amongst them. In their opinion, the ones on bicycle should have precedence in the traffic and so, they should not be forced to use protection because other vehicles placed them in danger. Thus, I argue that the use of bicycle in London was not simply an issue of convenience, but a concrete way of displaying ones effort in reducing emissions and establishing cycling as an accessible and secure way of moving about in the city. The bicycle as a symbol of a green lifestyle relies on the fact that it is a carbon free alternative for transport, but also relates to how much attention it has received as a central foci in the debates concerning so called "sustainable city development" – in which establishment of bike lines are considered of great importance (Isenhour 2011).

The deep players would moreover express concerned with carbon emission as an effect of extensive building and the use of fertile soil used for property building, and roads to these new areas for residency and industry. In Isenhour's study of sustainable living in Stockholm, several of her informants had moved from the suburbs and back into smaller apartments in the city, considering compact living and less need for transport as significant moves towards a sustainable life (2011: 118). Recent debates have focused on how increased urbanisation and compact living is a necessary global development, if we are to protect the environment and bio-diversity from damaging human intervention (ibid). When my informants discussed the effects of urban life in London, they would often refer to this debate. However, people were more concerned with how they lived in the city in terms of residency. None of my informants owned a house – all of them lived either in cohabiting households or in a rented

flat with their partners and family. Hannah for instance, claimed that it was a way of living that did not tie her down, financially nor geographically. The only ones who actually owned their homes were the large number of people who resided in houseboats along the canals. These are large boats traditionally used on the English canals for transport of people and equipment, but now are a significant number of houseboats used as permanent floating residences. Living in these boats provided the ability to move ones accommodation around according to need and wish: “If something happens, I can simply unfasten my house from the shore and move it to another place or even a city. I am dependent on water off-course, but other than that it feels quite liberating to live on a boat”, explained Annie, one of the Patchwork farmers.

Figure 9: Annie's houseboat garden

Houseboats is a fairly large expense at the time of purchase, around 5-7 000 pounds. However, the only expenses one would have once settled in a houseboat would be a small sum of money for lease of a mooring, which included access to hot water and electricity. The ones who did so, presented life in a houseboat as a solution to how to continue living in London while keeping up a life of urban agriculture with volunteering and part-time work. Pip – the assistant Head Grower – told me about how much he had struggled to get by while renting a room in a cohabiting household. Living expenses in London are high, especially for accommodation – a small bedroom would cost around 600 pounds a month. Pip described it as essential for him to avoid the rental market in order to be financially able to pursue his inclination towards urban agriculture, and continue living in London where his girlfriend had

her job and his friends were. This is another example of the complementary way of relating to the city and urban nature that is apparent amongst the deep players.

Distinction and spirituality

I quickly noticed how to live life in "harmony with nature" was a repetitive theme for conversations as well as a pattern of effort amongst the deep players. I would often be told that the possibilities of arranging in accordance with the principle of harmony, was considered endangered, if not already destroyed by the "neo-liberal ideology of growth and consumption". The pressure to buy new things and live expensive lives was described as something spinning out of control, as people would work long hours and hardly have time for anything but to make money and improve their careers. The office culture was made fun of and the deep players agreed that they did "not get" why people wanted to spend most of their time in an office. Paul's repeated complaint was how he did not like the time he had to spend working behind a desk doing all the other administrative work outside of the garden. Hannah also mentioned how she missed the work at the farm where she would be outside moving all the time, as opposed to now when she worked as a consultant, which involved a lot of time behind a desk. "I felt it right away, coming back to London, how my body responds badly to office work. My back-pain has returned and I have started to put on weight". This way that Hannah related her back-pain to working in an office might be a likely cause, however I also believe that her bodily sensations reflected her cognitive experience of being forced into an office-situation that it she did not like. She referred to her body's reaction both when she explained how much she enjoyed working at a farm, and when she underlined the downside to working in an office. It leaves the impression with me that the typical urban lifestyle of working in an office is not authentic, in the sense as appropriate practice for people to do, as opposed to working the land, being outside and moving about which is favoured amongst the urban agriculturalists. Despite how they make use of the city and how the city is both a prerequisite and the result of their actions, the urban agriculturalists are keen to underline the impression of doing something different than "the rest", and choosing a better life in the city than the "office workers". I argue that despite its message of egalitarianism and inclusion, the network of urban agriculture play the part of an alternative lifestyle in opposition to the bland and average urban dwelling.

Another feature I find significant to mention, is the widespread inclinations towards alternative spirituality. As I have argued would urban life be considered unnatural in its

simplified form, and the need for reconnecting to nature-like features in the city was thus of paramount importance. People expressed this in different ways, and I was slightly surprised by the number of people whom confessed to belief in *paganism*, a general term related to the Anglo-Saxon religion of the early Medieval England. The term *pagan* is from the Latin *paganus*, an adjective originally meaning rural, rustic, or of the country. As a noun, paganus was used to mean country dweller or villager. Most pagans, however, believe in the divine character of the natural world and paganism is often described as an *earth religion*. Paul would travel to Stonehenge for the summer solstice as a way of celebrating "Mother Earth", as he called it. Stonehenge is not normally open for public gatherings. However, due to the importance of summer solstice and Stonehenge as a mythical centre of attention for pagan people, it is open the longest day and shortest night of the year.

During my stay, one of the apprentices, Sarah planned her wedding, which was to be a pagan one. She planned to hold the ceremony and the subsequent party out of doors, in a wood owned by her fiancé, constituted by a pagan priest. She exclaimed that she did not mind what people thought, explaining that her mother had been slightly reluctant about the idea of a pagan wedding in the woods, as she wanted her wedding to be a symbol of the kind of life she and her coming husband wanted to live together. The wedding had to be done in the fashion of paganism, not in the city or even at an indoors venue on the countryside. What I found rather odd was that despite her effort on that day to live the life of a pagan, the married couple would continue living in the city; Sarah finishing off her apprenticeship whilst working with dietary advice amongst foreign immigrants, and her husband would still have his work in London and not in his wood. Despite being an imposer of morals and strong believer in the divinity of nature, Sarah would not sacrifice her urban life and the couple would continue living in their rented flat in Hackney. Sarah was also one to settle on living a complimentary life of city dwelling, through working with alternative food production, and making use of the apprenticeship with Growing Communities as means for accessing urban nature on weekly basis.

This tells me that, despite how paganism implies a connectedness to nature and the countryside, notions not easily confirmed through common urban practices, to relate to nature and the natural as also possible through engagement with urban agriculture. Approaching spirituality through the immediate of one's environment offered possibilities for emotional attachment to nature, despite how the garden would be in a dense residential area in London.

To enforce this impression of a life connected to nature, people would arrange their everyday lives to interact with urban nature, through concrete cultivation of land, but also in how they moved through the city landscape. This further extended into how the deep players shaped their private spheres, such as Saleh, that had created an extensive garden with different sorts of greens growing and five chickens that provided him with eggs. Proud of his garden he brought me around on several occasions for me to admire it, and showed the other volunteers pictures on his phone of the chickens. Likewise, Annie had established a box garden on the roof of her houseboat, and made a point of how she could simply lean out of her roof hatch to pick a handful of rocket for lunch. I argue that these are signs of how the assumed opposition between the city and the countryside, nature-culture, humans and non-humans, were concerns that the urban agriculturalists had overcome in seeking out means for doing and making the city in their image (Bubandt and Roepstorff 2003). Through creative use of the city, the deep players were imposing the changes necessary to establish what they considered a good life to live in the city of London. The green lifestyle included consuming green, residing green, moving green and working green, but these were all integrated into everyday practices and a "normal life". De Certau refers to this as "ways of operating" within a schema, in which he described the tactics as the nimble adjustments necessary for the everyday art of "making do" (1988: xi). I find that the schema in this case is translatable to urban life in London, and the adjustments are green aspects brought into living the city and doing the city. In the final section of this chapter, I wish to further investigate the motivations behind the implementing the complimentary lifestyle of green urban dwelling as well as the notion of "fostering community through community led change" brought forth as the primary aim of Growing Communities and their ventures.

Keep calm and carry on

Mark Luccarelli and Per Gunnar Røe has recently edited a book, Green Oslo, in which they investigate the potential for a greening of Oslo with considerable attention to "sustainable city living" (2012: 3). They further emphasise that for city living to be sustainable one should look beyond mere technological innovations and implementation of environmentally friendly structural changes, and turn to how the city should and could be regarded as *socially sustainable* as well (ibid). In the previous chapter and section, I have investigated the practices, relations and the social organisation amongst the participant, with the attempt at underlining my arguments according to key sensations and sentiments. To follow up on Luccarelli and Røe, I wish to investigate the potential for social sustainability in regards to

urban agriculture, Growing Communities and the work relating to the community garden. In doing so, I wish to explicitly start with further nuancing the motivation behind entering the arenas of urban agriculture and continue to attend them. Once again, Hannah and her reflections are helpful.

In one of the interviews I recorded, I asked Hannah what she thought about the low levels of conflicts in the garden, using the word "happy" to describe the participants. Her reply concerned my choice of the words, and she rather placed emphasis on an elusive subject of embodiment: "I would not use the word happy actually, I mean, we are not out having fun in that sense. I find that there is a general feeling of contentment in the garden, and I think that is because people are answering their inner urges. It is a deeply felt urge for being in the natural element and touching and working with the soil, with something natural". Whether "inner urges" are the source of contentment or not, I find Hannah's description very interesting and quite in line with similar responses I got when asking the same question to other participants in the garden. They were not there simply to have fun or enjoy themselves – it was a compulsive factor in their choice of returning. Hannah further characterised this "inner urge" as something that would lie latent in most people and that needed to be acted out in order for them to have inner peace. I consider her description they had to be there, and if they did not adhere to this need they would be unhappy, and that this feeling would be corporal as well as cognitive. This tells me that, not only meaning, but also emotions and senses fuel actions (Pink 2006) and the soil, plants, seeds and trees were all elements that prompted emotions that the participants described as necessary as well as satisfying to act upon. This observation is supported by Dengen (2010), Pink (2009) and Tilley (2000) as they also wish to include this somewhat difficult to define sense of need that stems from emotional proclivity towards intimately touching the soil and plants. Considering how Ingold (2000) defines taskscape and place-making as a process of emerging realities and becoming through experience with the environment, I find it suitable to include the bio-organic realm while searching for the source of the cohesiveness and calm in the garden. This was further highlighted by my informants, such as Saleh, who claimed that to be in the garden had proved to be the kind of "fuel" he needed to get by the rest of the week. He was diagnosed with the form of autism called Asperger's that made him uneasy in crowded social situations, and noise and busy activity around him could cause anxiety and confusion. Volunteering and gardening had become a necessary activity for him to do regularly as it made him calm but energised.

It became clear that the gardening practice of shaping and cultivating the natural, or likeness to the natural, provided emotional satisfaction and a process of becoming with the natural, not opposing it. Eric Mueggler makes use of Merelau-Ponty and his term *sedimentation* to name a process in which imagination and emotions permeate the perceptual world, organising it, structuring it, and enriching it with deposits of meaning and possibility (Mueggler 2001: 26). I find a process of sedimentation to occur in the interlocking activities of imagining, practicing and articulating the garden in a positive atmosphere with others. Thus, it is apparent that not only rational understandings or ideological convictions about the need to include city space as means for feeding the city denotes action, but also an emotional attachment to the landscape and the practices of food growing.

It is tempting to view the gardening processes as a form of *ritual* in which cleansing, or catharsis is gained. In the garden the destructive forces of the city seems far away, and sense of peace and tranquillity is restored. These become feelings that are kept alive in memories and physical markers when not present in the garden, such as dirt under the fingernails, or even a slight back pain from bending over the sprouting peas all day. As Saleh described: he would make use of the process of cleansing and attainment of positive feelings to get by when outsides of the garden, back in the city. The anthropological attention towards ritual practice, as well as gardening and agricultural practices as ritual, has been extensive and much can be said about it. Further might van Gennep's notion of *communitas* and gardening as a *rite de passage* seem fitting, as many of the volunteers in the community garden explained to me that they did indeed feel a sense of change and emotional shift when gardening, as well as a sense of belonging to the garden and the other volunteers. Nonetheless, I have chosen not emphasise those features, as I find it to imply a sense of organisation or bounded groups, that I struggle with. Ritual practice will indeed imply a form of predictability and routine that I do not find to adhere to my impression of the volunteer sessions. Rather I have emphasised senses of place and notion of joint mission, and will in the following section analyse the potential for social belonging to a group of people – to a *community.*

Growing a community?

Prominent with both the deep and the shallow players was how they described their participation, and what words they used in these descriptions. I would often ask directly about why they would spend time and resources on a community garden project such as the

one Growing Communities organises, and the replies were much the same; they would emphasise their wish to "get engaged in their community" or "get properly engaged in matters of food politics" or simply describe their involvement as "engagement". I see this engagement as created in notions about a possible or desirable garden and activities related to that garden, which indeed is the background for attending the volunteer sessions in the first place. These notions further meet the actual practices that are undertaken in the garden as well as the other actors present, which will inflict on their notions of engagement (Pink 2008: 181). This implies a continuation of the garden in notions about the state of the present and what kind of future we are facing, which to a great extent had political ramifications. To some extent, engagement denotes a significance of the acts beyond the mere performance, either as a political, social or personal commitment. In describing the desired outcome of these commitments, people frequently mentioned the term community, as well as how they wanted to "engage in the community".

Growing Communities presents themselves as a community-led enterprise that provides alternatives to the current damaging food system, something that they have made impossible to miss through choosing their name: Growing Communities. This was further emphasised in conversation with Kerry – one of founders of Growing Communities. She explained that they "aimed at fostering community through different project that can appeal to everyone" and that it was "only through community engagement that we really can make a difference. I have no trust in the politicians anymore – it is through uniting our self as a community we really can attain the power we need to make real changes". Growing Communities was not the only urban agricultural initiative that posed community building as a generative component of their existence – and I was commonly told that: "It [the garden] has brought us together as a community" – a statement made by Elisabeth, the volunteer coordinator at the King Henry's Walk Garden, another community garden further south in Hackney.

When considering the term community, I move onto well-treaded grounds in anthropology and sociology, and the ubiquity of vague references to community is a familiar story (Amit and Rapport 2002: 3). That the group of agents connected to Growing Communities and their garden felt that they had something in common is fairly unquestionable. Thus, in regards to what has been mentioned concerning shared ideas and practices, as well as the frequency of the term community when people spoke of urban agriculture, I am tempted to ascribe this phenomenon with the potential for "establishing community". This is indeed done by Parkins

and Craig in their analysis of the Cittaslow and Slow Living movement in which the "community drives the process of change" (2006: 82) – much in line with what Kerry argued for. Community is a valued term that implies belonging and connectedness amongst a group of people. However, it does not say anything about what that group consists of, neither in terms of relations, nor practices (Amit and Rapport 2002: 5). I find that in order to grasp the potential for a sense of community to occur amongst the participants, we have to move beyond the concept of community as an abstract entity in which to ascribe power and agency.

In regards to the garden, and the impression gathered when engaging with the network of urban agriculture, I do not find the potential for agency to lie in the grouping of these actors. Nor do I find it in the sense of belonging or membership to that group, these tendencies are too frail and ephemeral as social bonds are made and broken continuously. Several other social scientists have highlighted the problems inherent in using community to describe social formations (Amit & Rapport 2002; Phal 2005), and Pink further underlines how it is troublesome to ascribe community agency for change (2008: 169). I propose an argument in line with Pink, that the community denotes a potential for people to meet and establish social relations and that this potential lies within the locality of the activity. The notion of community amongst the residents in Hackney is located in concrete interaction and establishment of social bonds created through actual meetings. These social bonds are in most cases not profound and immutable, but more as a complex field of multiple, shifting, and often temporary social relations. As an example, I worked with a new volunteer one volunteer session in March, a woman in her forties, and it did not take many hours before I felt a true sense of personal contact with her, something I found to be mutual. She would reveal personal information about her decision not to have children, and how she disliked her job as a teacher, but was scared to resign. This relation seemed so powerful at the time, however when the session was over she left and did not return during the time I was there.

It is important to note that I do not propose that the form of community based on social interaction is dependent on propinquity – as it is a social network organised around shared space in the forms of events, meetings and labour (Tonkiss 2005: 16). I argue that it is through these social bonds created and the sense of affective and moral community that the sense of agency and power to act becomes strong and intelligible (ibid). I find Pink's description of agency as produced through local embodied social relationships suitable for my analysis (2008:163). How one meets as a consequence of joint commitment to a cause to

be essential in establishing senses of belonging and social cohesiveness. The motivation for engaging in urban agriculture, food politics and city development, would not be the same if the participants did not have a sense of potential for change and the power to make that change. I argue that power and confidence in ability to make a difference is established through the actual practice of doing urban agriculture and further developed, altered, and made known through narratives and discourses.

What is more, I wish to draw attention to how dealing with the "natural" made the experience of what they were fighting for, more tangible and intelligible as one had personal claims to it. Through working the soil, one would use ones bodies and senses, as well as ones intellectual and abstract capacity, to alter the landscape and thus alter the perception of that landscape (Ingold 2000). I, moreover, consider the power in these activities to entail the fact that they were different from a common mode of operating in the city environment, with a slower pace, tactile and unmediated dealings with the environment in addition to concrete face-to-face interaction. Certain settings are more prone to produce emotions than others, as a result of particular configurations of social scripts, the performance or the actors present and the staging of that space (Irvine 2009: 5). I found that the practices of cultivating the soil in collaboration with others forced the participant into social interaction, and the calm surroundings and relaxed atmosphere allow people to be emotionally open and friendly. At the same time, they meet others who take an interest in similar issues as one self, and thus, these become topics of conversations and discussions. The same emphasis on context proved important for Bartlett in her studies of a garden project, as she sees the enhancement of intellectual and embodied experiences when it occurs within a safe and supporting group (2005: 41). Shared values and collective knowledge supports individual identity, and shared narratives foster the group's vitality. This often connects the particularities of place that support a rich social matrix to the stories and meanings embedded in the locale (ibid: 312). Thus, the garden becomes a secluded space in the urban hustle, which forges the sense of belonging and community developed, and action and mobilisation into an expanding network.

Summary

With the use of an example of how to deal with slugs, I have revealed the differences and potential conflicting interests amongst the urban agriculturalists. I have further highlighted some of the central features of the different groupings of deep and shallow players, as a mode

for depicting how they are, and how they do green in London. This has allowed me to address the notion of the garden as a proto-space in which institutional-like features of urban agriculture are generated, a process that I will study more thoroughly in the following chapter. I find it timely to now address how the garden and its participants are connected to a wider set of places, people and relations.

5 Producing green networks and arenas for reconnection

> *You who control the transportation of food supplies are in charge, so to speak of, of the city's lifeline, of its very throat.*
>
> Cassiodorus

In the following, I will make use of the garden and Growing Communities as a point of departure to unravel how different modes of urban agriculture integrate in an expanding network in London. I find it necessary to expand my perspective of urban agriculture beyond the garden and into the realm of policies, politics and economics, on order to give an accurate description of the phenomena and do justice to the elements that it is made up of. In pursuing different modes of urban agriculture, engagement for green city dwelling is proliferated, maintained and changed. The network perspective is useful in this respects as to understand and depict how social relationships are linked to each other (Hannerz 1980: 164), as well as to account for social bonds, or ties, that can be both weak and strong (Granoveter 1973). I argue that the network consists of people who enjoy and prefer the flexibility and heterogeneity of engagement it offers, while others seek a more predictable way, and more established arenas for, doing urban agriculture in London. The extent to which this network is invoked as an interactional schema for enforcing demands for green urban development, I argue that it contains features of political opposition and urban social movement. I will moreover attend to issues of control of, and access to, urban space in the city of London. I consider the network of urban agriculture as agents of a distinctly spatial politics in the city, both in targeting urban space as the point of struggle and in using urban space as a resource for political mobilisation. This is politics of landscape and politics of bodies, through the everyday processes of being and doing (Tonkiss 2005: 59).

Arenas for reconnection

I consider the establishment of Growing Communities as an example of contemporary modes of resistance and opposition, through novel ways of gaining attention and support for their cause. The enterprise was established in 1997 by five former campaigners involved in different strands of the environmentalist movement – working with animal rights, protection of the rainforest and general subversive actions towards institutions such as the financial

sector in the U.K. Having grown tired of demonstrating in the streets and the continuous struggle of making ones voice heard through means of protest, slogans and rallies, they sought concrete, tangible ways to deal with an issue of food security in the city. Establishing a social enterprise manifested the group's existence legally in the world of contracts, rules and regulation (Amit and Thrift 2002: 132). It provided a formal base through which they could apply for funds and facilitate projects, aiming at generating awareness of the issues of food politics, particularly in their local borough of Hackney.[9]

Correspondently to places such as the community garden, there were a large number of other arenas for people to engage in matters concerning urban agriculture, both initiated by Growing Communities and other local-level efforts. Informal gatherings, local initiatives and non-profit arrangements all make up the side to the urban agricultural scene that required an element of local knowledge in order to gain access. Hannah proved to be the partner in crime that I needed, already the first time we met she invited me to the monthly Transition Town Hackney meeting – as a first of many events, seminars and "open days" I was invited to come along to. Transition Town is an international grassroots network that claim to raise awareness of sustainable living, and builds what they identify as local ecological resilience. Food is a key area, along with claims for resilient responses to peak oil, climate destruction, and economic instability (Transition Town: url). The focus of this particular meeting revolved around how to live off the land, in the city, through foraging for food in the many green lungs in London. Before the presentations there was to be a food-share, and in the e-mail Hannah forwarded to me it clearly stated that it was to be an open and free meeting in which people were welcome to comment and take part in the debate.

Considering my novice ways of moving about in London, I had timed my entrance to the venue much before the actual talk was to begin, but despite my shyness I went inside. There were not many people, and I could not see Hannah anywhere, so I placed the vegetarian meal I had prepared on a table full of cutlery and plates, and a few other dishes. Hannah had made me aware that it was common and preferred to bring vegetarian food, and I took her advice even though the e-mail never specified it. As Hannah was not there yet, I did not dare to approach anyone, but sat down in a large couch with a view across the room. Not before long, more people came, placing their vegetarian dishes on the table, and it was apparent that many knew each other from before as they greeted each other through small hugs or

[9] This is similar to Sarah Pink's study of town councils who seeks to achieve environmental awareness among their town residents (2008:169).

handshakes. To my surprise a party of three people who seemed to have arrived together and knew each other well, chose to sit down next to me and greeted me with friendly faces. We started talking about reasons for attending the meeting and realising that I was a researcher, they asked about my fieldwork, and the conversation continued with them naming places they recommended me to visit and people to talk with. The atmosphere was pleasant and they did not hesitate whether to include me or not – rather I became automatically incorporated into their conversations. Just before the talk begun, Hannah rushed in, making apologises about her polenta bread not baking quickly enough in the oven. With a slightly blushed face she greeted people she seemed to know with a nod and a smile, but sat down next to me and joined my group, in which the conversation now ran freely about topics related to food and farming.

This was the first of many occasions Hannah brought me along to events across London. She also arranged for me to accompany her at the Soil Association[10] conference, we went to see a lecture by Vandana Shiva[11] at Cambridge University, and we attended a talk in a community garden further south in Hackney on how to grow food on small areas such as balconies and front gardens. As time passed, I received information about events that "might be of interest" form other people than Hannah. The more people I acquainted, the more involved and included in activities I became, with and without Hannah's company. Based upon this line of events, acquaintances made, conversations and interaction with different agents across London, it became clear to me that the network of urban agriculture was vast and diverse. Nonetheless, when attending events I would often recognise three or four familiar faces from events the weeks before, and at the end of my fieldwork, I had gained many new informants scattered around London and engaged in various local-level efforts.

Despite the varied arenas for people of shared sentiments to meet, no common venue such as a centre, or an organization to become a member of urban agriculture, existed. I found that the political and/or ideological attentiveness was unequally shared and distributed – what people took particular interest in would vary. There was not one case or one idea put forward,

[10] The Soil Association is a charity based in the United Kingdom. Its activities include campaign work on issues including opposition to intensive farming, support for local purchasing and public education on nutrition; as well the certification of organic food. It developed the world's first organic certification system in 1967 - standards which have since widened to encompass agriculture, aquaculture, ethical trade, food processing, forestry, health & beauty, horticulture and textiles. Today it certifies over 80% of organic produce in the UK.

[11] Vandana Shiva is an Indian environmental activist and anti-globalization author, very well respected amongst the environmentalist movement. Shiva has authored more than 20 books, and is a highly prized lecturer and key note speaker.

but a cluster of ideas all having to do with dissatisfaction with the present food system and concern for future food-supply, as well as a demand for an urban food shed. Meetings, events and talks though, were focused upon a message – often of a political character – and interaction would in large be based around exchange of knowledge and opinions. I never witness these exchanges turn into heated discussions, rather it was a general concern for "spreading the word" – to make people aware and attentive of what could make "urban living in London more sustainable". Moreover, as shown in the example from the Transition Town meeting, there would be room for debates, people to share their own experiences, and a general state of social interaction among the participants.

Hannah explained that she went to these events in order "to keep track of what is going on and you know, to meet people". As I have mentioned the network and thus social movement of urban agriculture will rely on different modes of engagement and the possibility for both deep and shallow play. However, these modes are not discrete and often overlapping, as in the example from the Transition Town meeting. Hannah is a well-embedded agent in this network and much of her everyday life consisted of confirming her engagement, through paid labour, volunteering, and maintenance of the network through taking part in various formal and informal events. This provided Hannah with financial security and a stabile base to which she could arrange her life accordingly, without compromising her engagement for urban agriculture. It is possible to see Hannah as a *commuter* – one which could easily attend both the formal and informal sector of urban agriculture, and enjoy the benefit of both. I argue that commuters were essential for the establishment of urban agriculture, as they would drive forward the process of institutionalisation, at the same time as they brought force to the more flexible arrangement. It was the freedom of engaging according to ones needs and possibilities that allowed for people to become interested in the first place, and consequently, the network of urban agriculture to expand and regenerate.

Expanding and politicising the network

Gatherings such as the Transition Town meeting was a monthly activity, but one did not need to sign up in advance nor pay a fee to enter, and once there one could easily stay in the back and observe, as oppose to actively take part in the discussions. Hence it can be considered a flexible arrangement that one could attend in case of curiosity about urban agriculture, and a potential stepping stone for further engagement. The event was also a something deep-players would attend, as Hannah explained – it was a strategy to nurture ones network of friend and

contacts as well as to gain information about recent developments and projects. In the introduction I quoted Hannah on how the issue of alternative agriculture had not become life changing before she realised the political ramification of the food industry. During these gatherings the political and/or ideological commitments became more profound and articulate through proliferation of some basic ideas about subversive actions with political features borrowed from anti-capitalism and socialism. This included an emphasis on autonomy and self-management, and suspicion of representation or mediation by official leaders, delegates and politicians (Tonkiss 2005: 62). However, I find this political concern to differ from the traditional image of political protest, as policymakers were not the main targets in this activism – their claims were mainly directed towards how the common citizen should contribute to change. Through a call for direct action amongst fellow city dwellers, one would urge people to make use of their local opportunities to establish green and sustainable community projects. Growing Communities emphasised their attention towards local residents, seeing it as slightly naïve to believe that one could strive towards a sustainable future for London dwellers through simply appealing to politicians and other policymakers. To make changes, one had to start with people's everyday concerns such as consumption, transport and access to green areas, and make use of the potential in alternation through local-level efforts.

My observations adhere to Tonkiss' view of the politics of contemporary urban movements as directed to specific issues and localities, and tend to raise wider questions of identity and lifestyle (2005: 62). The urban agricultural movement in London is oriented towards place in term of access to urban spaces, use of those spaces and the effect of alternating that space into an arena for reconnection and awareness to nature and the environment. Thus I consider the network of urban agriculture as embedded in the process of "politics of space", through contested use of urban space (Tonkiss 2005: 59). I argue that the social relationships I observed and the forms which they assume together (Hannerz 1980: 181), to be contemporary forms of social movement and mobilised forms of *everyday urban activism* (Pink 2008: 172).

The term urban resistance or social movements will often trigger associations of citizen uprisings, civil disobedience and to some extent violence. However, I lean on recent studies of urban activism in the U.K. that points to a shift in the profile and activities of the contemporary activist, supporting my observations (Chatterton and Hodkinson 2006; Pink

2008; Chatterton and Pickerill 2010). Rather than pushing at the margins or emerging from the grassroots, contemporary activists are often middle class, competent in their engagement with bureaucracy, and in large involved in legalised activities (Pink 2008: 164). The groups of actors are loosely structured and participation will be *ad-hoc* to the extent that it can be unpredictable. They will not necessarily express a unified activist subjectivity, but adapt a pragmatic approach based upon complex, often contradictory articulations of political claims or opinions (Chatterton and Hodkinson 2006). Thus analysis of contemporary social movements will differ from that of political parties or advocacy groups due to the lack of unified claim, and concrete activities to express their opinions (Tonkiss 2005: 59). I find all of these characteristics to concur to my analysis of the features of urban agriculture and urban agriculturalists. Nonetheless, I have identified mechanisms that do in fact create a sense of joint cause, or joint mission in the garden. Such as how the notion of taskscape and the sensuous experiences, provided a sense of place – as well as meaningful activities of cultivating urban space. The garden would hold flexible network features, such as their volunteering opportunities, but at the same time would Paul and Growing Communities adhere to the sphere of bureaucracy and legislation, an argument I will return to. The expanding network of events and seminars were further arenas to confirm or develop notions about green and sustainable urban practices, as well as a space of which social bonds were forged and maintained. To underpin my observation and argument, I will attend to how Growing Communities facilitated different arenas and modes of engagement to attract a variety of people and according to themselves "bring about change through fostering community". I argue that how Growing Communities manage their affairs are essential in the establishment of "sense of community", joint cause and collective responsibility for one's environment. This is further creating arenas where the potential for activism and social movements are shaped (Pink 2008).

Imperial landscape and acquiring space

Originally focused on practices such as the community garden and a box scheme, the enterprise now sustains 23 part time employees and a multiple of different projects concerning food production and distribution, as well as an extensive educational scheme to train urban growers. Through offering "real alternatives to the current food system" Growing Communities seeks to proliferate knowledge, and they consider local engagement of paramount importance. I consider the community gardens as essential in this project as they provide an arena for people to literally stick their hands into the issue of food production in

the city. Social movements are in most cases situated or materially emplaced as means for gathering people together, at the same time as they serve as positive spaces from which to create alternative futures (Horton 2006: 126). I regard the garden as generative proto-spaces of which present concerns and notions about future risks are transformed into hands-on engagement, and agency for change. Employment of particular places through which shared meaning and solidarity can develop, is vital for the urban agriculturalists in creating room for activism and for emotions.

Despite the activist features of the work by Growing Communities, I argue that through the educational scheme, urban agriculture is adapted into a bureaucratic realm oriented toward the demands for education, formal titles, and proofs of accomplishments. Through establishing the community garden they proposed a model for urban space to be made sustainable and green, one that could be duplicated and proliferated across London. The gardens become permanent alternation of the landscape in Hackney, and I argue that Growing Communities made use of their models in proliferating their own work and ambitions across the landscape of Hackney. Through establishing what they called "The Patch Work Farm" their efforts became visible alternations across Hackney.

The carved city

The Patch Work Farm is not a farm *per se*, but rather scattered sites in Hackney that are turned into urban agricultural land. This is a project to secure the former apprentices paid work in accordance with their newly acquired skills. Upon completion of their training the apprentices will be offered to continue working with urban farming on approximately 5x5 square meters of land in back gardens, on church land and on estates to set up a growing site. Through visiting and working at three out of the four operating sites of the Patchwork Farm I was struck by the diversity of the sites in terms of location as well as atmosphere. For instance the site run by Annie, a colourful woman in the beginning of her thirties, at St. Paul's church. Behind tall wooden fences, intended to keep the noise of the surrounding traffic out, Annie managed a delicate and evocative patch in the back of the vicar's private church garden, hidden from public access. The vicar's garden was massive with a secluded section for the private use of the vicar's family and Annie's patch lightly fenced in with fruit trees and bushes somewhat away from the vicars own use. She was in charge of the site on her own, but had a close friend who came almost every Tuesday to help out and she would invite other friends of her with some spare time to get some "weeding meditation". Annie

explained: “Some people stay the whole day, such as Steven, while others just pop by for an hour or two and we will work and chat and drink coffee which is actually really nice”. Annie’s garden is a joyful and pretty garden. However, it is hidden from view and access, that is, without an invitation by Annie. In effect Annie’s garden, through offering “weeding meditation” also became a therapeutic space – akin to that of the Allan’s Garden, but for less people.

Figure 10: Jack and Ida’s Patch Work Farm at Castle Climbing Centre, Hackney

As a stark contrast, the site of Jack and Ida were located on the grounds of a public climbing centre in which the climbers have open access to the site as well as visitors to the onsite café. It was a larger site than Annie’s, which required two Patch Work Farmers rather than one, and they worked together every Tuesday and Friday. The garden has become a focal point at the centre, and it attracts many people who want to have a look as well as volunteer. Jack and Ida explained that they welcomed help as they wanted young people to get engaged in gardening and appreciated the attention the garden got. Due to the average age and perhaps the other practices engaged through the centre the atmosphere was youthful and more active than Annie’s garden, despite their similar purpose.

The Patch Work Farmer is a prolongation of the work Growing Communities does in Hackney as they aim to foster local production of organic food as well as a local food economy. All the farmers are attached to the enterprises, due to their need of financial and legal support in accessing a site and turning it into a production site. The patches are further material configurations of the landscape in Hackney, and will attract both observers and people who wish to participate. As a consequence of offering different modes of engagement and atmospheres at the Patch Work Farms, different people get attracted to Growing Communities in different ways, pertaining to their personal appreciations. I further ensue that a desired outcome of spreading gardens, or growing sites, across Hackney, is to integrate urban agriculture into the landscape and mode of dwelling, and establish arenas for reconnection to the materiality of ones surrounding environment. In other words: it is a strategy for acquiring space in London to realise their vision of a sustainable city and to make it more accessible through material alternations of urban space.

I further argue that Growing Communities, and the network of urban agriculture, has politicised their use of, or demand for, urban spaces in terms of ownership, access, uses and meanings (Tonkiss 2005: 63). This argument links nicely on Lefebvre, and how he identifies the struggle of rights to the city as a consequence of how groups of people takes hold of, or appropriate land – and fight for the legal rights of holding that land (Harvey 2012: xiii). I find that the mode through which Growing Communities target the rights to urban spaces, they are somewhat imperialistic in their procedures. Gaining control over the use of a variation of areas in Hackney, will allow them to implement the deep players' notion of moral community to a larger audience, and thus enforce a way of life in accordance with this morality. I further argue that their strategy of embracing consumption as a state of normalised affairs in contemporary society, but then seek to alter the way that people consume, is another successful way of establishing their aim for sustainable urban life to a broader audience than simply the deep players establish. It is through this range of activities the indirect activism of the movement is produced and the way aspects of the material environment and experiences of the city of London (and ones place in the city) are transformed (Pink 2008: 164).

The comfort of organic produce[12]

As I have mentioned – Growing Communities also targeted consumption practices and everyday trade, as means for proliferating their model for sustainable urban living. They

[12] The heading is inspired by Daniel Millers's, *The Comfort of Things* (2008).

established a box scheme, which is subscription-based distribution of organic vegetables and fruits to local residents in the Hackney area, operated through a weekly delivery of vegetables at different pick-up points. Distribution systems of this sort have gained popularity the past ten years, especially in urban areas in Europe and North America (Isenhour 2011: 120). The arrangement is based upon an idea of shortening the trail between producer and customer, both in order to enhance people's awareness of where the food originates, but more importantly to secure a better financial situation for the farmers. Such a scheme is potentially profitable for small-scale, organic or bio-dynamic farmers that struggle to compete in a market dominated by large corporations and supermarket chains. The aim is to shorten the distribution-chain so the producer can sell their produce at a price that secures their livelihood and financial future. Growing Communities holds the box scheme key in their aim of providing Hackney with fresh, organic and locally produced vegetables and fruits at affordable prices. They offer a discount for pensioners and claim that through direct trade relations with the producers they can offer organic food at less cost than shops like Whole Foods and Planet Organic, which are organic chain-stores that also operates in Hackney. In fact Growing Communities was the first enterprise to offer a box scheme in London, but now there are approximately 600 such schemes operating in the UK and by early 2012 retail sales via such schemes were in excess of £150 million per annum (Soil Association: url). My attention was drawn to how the box scheme is another mode for acquiring space and people's engagement in the city. It becomes hard for consumers in Hackney to excuse their lack of organic shopping and environmental awareness, as growing Communities provides a multiple of opportunities for consuming organic produce and claim sustainable acts. The way Growing Communities operate their box scheme, as well as their educational scheme and Patch Work Farm, the notion of network diminishes in favour of more permanent and institutional-like features of urban agriculture.

Proliferating the notion of sustainable consumption and urban dwelling

The box scheme fits well into the object of reducing food miles and carbon emissions, as them title is slightly incorrect because the produce is in fact packed in individual bags, which require less space than boxes. These are distributed either by the electric milk van Growing Communities have at their disposal for larger transportations, or the bike trailers, and the delivery will cause a minimum of emissions. Kerry argued furthermore that to have collective pick up points could potentially foster a sense of community as it provided an arena in which people could meet and interact through a joint endeavour.

There are in total ten different pickup points in Hackney, in which the subscribers have to collect their bags according to the nearest pickup point's schedule, and these places differ in what kind of interaction that it encourages. At the pickup point at the health food shop "Mother Earth", the nearby subscribers have the opportunity to collect their bags during the shops opening hours from Wednesday afternoon and throughout Thursday and Friday. The staff will aid the subscribers in finding their rightful bag and are available for questioning and conversation, as well as providing a face on the practice of collecting the bag. My attention was drawn to how the small space of the shop potentially encourage social interaction between the subscribers, and gives them the opportunity to do the excess shopping in the same place as they get their vegetables. I consider the act of installing pickup point in shops and cafés that offers other sustainable consumption opportunities, as a deliberate strategy employed by Growing Communities in line with the ambition of creating local economies and close relations between, produce, retailer and consumer.

Figure 12: The electric milk van

In contrast, the pickup point located in a public garden in Dalston is quite different. Due to the constant flow of people visiting the garden, the place the bags are placed in lockers in which only the subscribers hold the key. The pickup point is unstaffed and the distribution rest on principles of trust as all the subscribers have access to every ones bags at once. However, this has not proved to hold much trouble, according to Kerry, as the bags are clearly marked with names and "people seem to behave". I came to learn that to have the

pickup point in a public garden has proved beneficial for both the box scheme customers and the visitors to the garden. Shoshanna, one of the committed enthusiasts that spend much of her time in the garden, explained in a recorded interview, that she was convinced of the benefits of having a pick-up point in the garden: “Our main issue is how to make the garden and what it offers in terms of a peaceful green space in the heart of Dalston, visible and attractive. Providing a range of activities, such as a pickup point we hope to gain more attention and visits, particularly from the box scheme holders. And it feels good to have Growing Communities which are so well known and respected pioneers on urban agriculture on board with us”. Shoshanna illustrated how Growing Communities was indeed a well renowned enterprise, one in which other local-level efforts turned to for inspiration and support.

Figure 13: Lockers at the pick-up point in Dalston, Hackney

Despite the fact that the pickup points are parts of a commercial venture, I recognised the potential for interaction between the customers of the box scheme, as well as between the customers and other agents. This provide an arena of which Growing Communities can reach out to the shallow players without turning to propaganda and campaigns, simply by accessing their everyday mode of shopping for supper. I also see that to become a box scheme holder potentially foster further engagement and thus generate modes of sustainable urban living beyond merely consumption. I find my argument to resemble that of Pink’s study on how

these assemblages provide places for articulating sentiments such as “belonging” and “becoming untied”, made in operating the same embodied narrative of attaining their organic and ethically traded meal together (Pink 2008: 178). In this shared experience among local residents Growing Communities confirms themselves as a predictable alternative for consumption of food, and social interaction in relation to food in the city. What is more – the pickup points provide links between Growing Communities and other embryonic institutions and assemblages of agents that work towards sustainable urban life.

This type of sociality links nicely with the notion of place as event, as these varied places Growing Communities initiate and facilitates, gathers sentiments, ideological beliefs, relationships, skills and objects. The places offer a context for interconnectedness and a shared physical, sensory and social local world in which individuals can prosper and develop their engagement with urban agriculture (Pink 2008:179). When considering the experience of place, I have refused the sense of place as a fixed and bounded geographic place, and sought an understanding of place, and belonging to that place, as existing in peoples’ imagination, relations and practices. This happens despite that they do not interact with that place more than once a week. This implies a process of place that is constituted through, on the one hand, the lived sensory experience, knowledge and practice of human agents and, on the other, their relationship and engagement with the materiality of the objects and environments that they perceive, reflect on and creatively produce (Brown and Picerill 2009: 4). I consider the vegetable gardens, box schemes and educational schemes as such places, or events, in a network of varied practices and relations based on (all-encompassing or partial) engagement for urban agriculture and/or alternative food production. In this people can seek solace and support with others who share their values and aspects on life, as well as engage in material activities that further “satisfy inner needs” (Pink 2008: 179). The gardens and the activities they engaged became places to reflect on emotional needs, balancing activism with other aspects of their lives, and to enact new practices that sustained this emotional balance to enable on-going activism (Pink 2008:165).

I argue that some modes of urban agriculture constitutes as seemingly permanent alternatives for doing and being in London, which resulted in concrete configurations of the landscape and practices through establishing places and sense of place amongst participants. For instance would the paid positions as patchwork farmers be such a permanent setting, as well as the weekly delivery of the box scheme. This would result in a change in urban agriculture

from “emergent realities” to what some would consider their every-day lives and processes of being. As a contrast would mobile and less established modes for engaging in urban agriculture also be important for the prevalence of the network, as it attracted a large amount of people. The network would rely on the “strength of weak ties”, to paraphrase Mark Granoveter (1973), to expand and continue, but also be revitalised and alternated. To return to the notion of deep and shallow play – both modes of play would be important, not as oppositions, but as mutually constitutive. Expansion, maintenance, and change of the practices and relations of the network would occur through weak links and weak bonds. Often would engagement start with a weak bond – such as Margaret, that I met at the Transition Town meeting, who happened to share house with a person that dragged her along at a meeting a couple of months ago. This sparked off an interest and she continued to attend these meetings, well as volunteering with another community garden in Hackney.

While experience with urban agriculture through attending these flexible arrangements can reinforce belonging and community, it is important to note that it can as easily shut out newcomers and raise barriers for entry. These are the same strong ties as those that help to exclude outsiders, such as a process of distinction that became evident in relation to the lunch in Allan’s Garden. Despite this focus, these categories of ties and level of engagement, are not discrete and the concept of who are deep players or activist, and thus shallow player and non-activist, is contested and fluid. I argue that identities are complex, multi-layered and hybrid and there will be variations in their articulation and activities (Horton 2006: 128).

Political responses and joint efforts

What I have dealt with until now are local-level projects that have expanded and gained momentum over time, but that still holds on to their community appeal. I have argued that the network of urban agriculture provide both *ad-hoc* arrangements and heterogeneity, while at the same time establish permanent and institutional-like urban arenas. Nonetheless, I argue that both these processes are part of establishing shared collective identities and values, and variations of modes of which people perform, alternate and maintain activism (Amit and Thrift: 142). Nevertheless, for these projects to have a place to function and expand, the London authorities have a major impact. The politicisation of urban agriculture occurs through a continuous debate about use and control in competition with other urban functions, and will be influenced by urban policies and development plans. What surprised me was the level of involvement of the London authorities, and the political willingness to adhere to the

claims made by the numerous interest groups and social enterprises. In the following, I will address how "the city feeding off the city" as a policy has become an integrated part of urban planning in London, and in effect enables the existence of many of these local-level projects. My intention will not be to trace the possible political impact of this form of activism might have, or to overly politicise their actions, but to analyse this engagement in light of the relationship with the policies, institutions and flows of money.

Growing London through policies and lobbying

Greater London Authority (GLA) holds political and legislative power in London, which is the top-tier administrative body. It consists of a directly elected executive Mayor of London, currently Boris Johnson, and an elected 25-member London Assembly with scrutiny powers. The power is distributed amongst the thirty-two different boroughs that compromise Greater London, whereas twelve of these in inner London. London Borough Councils, which are elected every four years and are considered as local government districts, administer the boroughs. Through the local election, a council of about fifty people is chosen as well as a Mayor of the borough. The boroughs are responsible for running most local services in their areas, such as schools, social services, waste collection and roads. Some London-wide services are run by the Greater London Authority, and some services and lobbying of government are pooled within London Councils (GLA 2013).

Growing Communities operate within the borough of Hackney, a relatively small, but diverse borough in North-East London. The market gardens, the Patch Work Farm and the Farmers Market are all projects that demand allocation of land and permission to make use of these sites, in which the Hackney council holds authority. According to Kerry, one of the founders of Growing Communities, they hold a prolific relation to the council, and as mentioned, the council's awareness of environmental issues as key in that respect. The past years the council has eagerly promoted a "Greener Hackney" campaign with projects ranging from easier accessible bike stands, improved recycling, as well as supporting community gardening projects. In fact, all the organic waste produced by the households in Hackney is made into compost and returned for free to the local residents if they are in need of it. I concur that the attention given to local sustainable projects by the council, has made it easier to be allocated land and gain permission for regulating areas for organic food production. The recent expansion of the Patch Work Farm can be seen as example of this tendency, as well as how the community gardens are allowed to continue leasing park-land at affordable prices.

The existence of the gardens is, moreover, enmeshed in different strands of policies and legal considerations, especially in relation to the council, of which I first was made aware of through registration as a volunteer. Upon attending the required introduction course one receives two forms that one has to sign in order to go on working as a volunteer. They call the first "Guidelines and practical considerations for the volunteers", which includes indicative word on security measures to consider, as well as normative statements on how to behave within the garden and towards the other participants. Paul explained that this is a procedure to emphasise how the volunteer sessions are peaceful and respectful community practices, albeit with some rules of conduct the participants needs to adhere to. "You know, if people start behaving badly first of all we would lose the nice volunteers, and then someone from the council will shut us down", Paul explained.

Hackney Council allocates the parkland in which the gardens are placed on a time-limited lease. In order to get access the land in first place, they had to make a formal application to the council in which the main argument posed by Growing Communities rested on the prospect of fostering a sense of community through the gardens. By making it easy for local residents to get engaged through volunteering, visits and school trips, Growing Communities claim the gardens as community beneficial project. To confirm its continuous importance, they must provide and communicate relevant documentation to the council. The numbers of how many volunteers that attend the sessions are important in order of adding them up and place them in schemas and statistics. Upon attending the volunteer sessions, Paul would urge the volunteers to sign in and out with name and date in a book which keeps track of all the volunteers of the garden throughout the year. Paul explained that Growing Communities need to keep track of the number of volunteers they attract in relation to assessment of their work that will further secure their lease of the land.

Another aspect that coloured the increase of urban agricultural projects in London was the preparations for the Summer Olympics that were to be held in London in July 2012, and a campaign named *Capital Growth*. Already in 2006 did the Mayor's Office initiate The *London Food Board*, which is an advisory group of independent food policy organizations and experts that were to meet the requesting for better access, knowledge and attention on food and food growing in London. The chair is held by Rosie Boycott – a longstanding environmentalist acknowledged by both politicians and private actors (GLA 2013). As a

consequence of building a new Olympic Stadium on the grounds of a large site for allotments at the Hackney Marches, demands were made upon the Mayors' Office to redeem the loss.

Through the London Food Board, Boycott launched an extensive campaign called "Capital Growth: The campaign for 2012 new food growing spaces in London". As the name suggests the campaign aimed at establishing 2012 new food-growing spaces in central London by the end of 2012. Set up as a partnership between the Mayor of London, an extensive lobbying organisation called London Food Link, and financially supported through the Big Lottery's Local Food Fund, Capital Growth offered practical help, grants, training and support to groups wanting to establish community food growing projects (Capital Growth 2013). I came across Capital Growth gardens all over London, as well as numerous people that attended their events aimed at inspiring people to set up a growing site. At the beginning of my fieldwork, it looked as though the campaign would not succeed with achieving the number of 2012 new growing sites. To gain more attention amongst the London dweller, Capital growth launched an extensive information campaign called "Dig for Victory", five months before the Olympics were to start. Hinging on the famous war campaign described in chapter two, and the impending Olympics, the campaign became an immediate success. By July 2012 the Capital Growth informed that they had indeed achieved 2012 new growing spaces, which had been registered the three years the campaigners had been working. In fact, the Patchwork Farm project was entirely based upon funds allocated through Capital Growth, and each site was labelled with the number describing their place in line of the 2012 sites.

I ensue that a consequence of the work done by Capital Growth, urban agriculture grew in terms of number of sites for growing, as well as in number of people who took part and much of the reason for that was allocation of funds. To set up a garden requires money to buy a number of things, from tools and equipment, to seeds and compost, which are expensive items. As mentioned the Capital Growth project is funded through the Big Lottery Fund (BIG), a permanent scheme in which both private and public projects can apply for funds. BIG is responsible for distributing 40 per cent of all funds raised (about 11 pence of every pound spent on a Lottery ticket) by the National Lottery. This totals around £600 million each year, in which 80-90 per cent is awarded to voluntary and community sector organizations (BIG 2013).

Some say that Capital Growth was a PR stunt well executed by the Mayor's Office of Boris Johnson to gain some "green votes" for the London mayoral election of 2012, as well as

silence the harsh protest concerning the amount of money invested in the Olympic stadium. Whatever the reasons and possible political gains for the Mayor, Capital Growth provided many Londoners with the necessary funding, administrative guidance and practical help to make use of plots of land in central London to grow food.

The ambition

In sum, there is considerable political attention given to the issue of urban agriculture in London, both governmental and non-governmental, which provided a positive public discourse concerning the subject. I argue that how these lobby organisations and advisory groups work, underpins my argument about how urban agriculture consists of a network of relations to both flexible and more institutional-like entities. The political good-will is vital in order for groups of actors – such as Growing Communities – to make projects happen. Positive political attention contributes to ease the process for accessing land, and to get supportive funds. At the same time, there has to be flexible arrangements to provide alternatives for those that simply wish to make urban agriculture a *part of their life*, and not a *way of life* as such. The participation of these agents is vital for the proliferation of the network of urban agriculture across London. I find that there is much momentum gained in being a large amount of people engaged in the matter, which results in numerous physical expressions such as the garden, of this engagement.

Growing Communities is further concerned with creating networks of alternative food production and distribution, independent of large corporations and political strategies. Key in that respect is trade and alternative arenas for trade, as means to transforming the local society into a sustainable one. To engage in trade relations is something city dwellers do every day often many times a day – buying a coffee, shop for dinner, or go out for a pint. I argue that through targeting trade relations Growing Communities enter the everyday sphere, and through effective marketing they have the possibility of making considerable alterations in people's practices, as well as relations. Take the box scheme – which is a contract-based relation between the farmer, the enterprise, and the customer in a seemingly permanent relation. The importance of strengthening the direct relation between producers and consumers was Kerry's emphasis during our conversation, as well as how Growing Communities were foregrounding a business model that would be sustainable in an urban context such as London. The issue at stake was not to decrease consumption of food as such,

but to change how people consumed. The ambition for fostering community will be a consequence of changes in trade relations, rather than non-monetary engagements.

I have been tempted to treat the community gardens and the volunteering as set apart from the sphere of money and trade, as there were no material gains for the participants. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that the gardens are in fact "market gardens" which produce a crop that is sold through the box scheme. Paul would to some extent downplay the commercial aspect of the gardens and how he had demands of amount of harvest to fulfil. He would never urge us to quicken our pace or to stay longer than we wanted even though there was a lot of harvest left to do. Instead Paul would cut down his lunch and worked overtime to finish the harvest on his own. How the labour done by the volunteers in the garden in fact supported a business model did cause some concerns with the volunteers, however the benefits overshadowed the disadvantages. Saleh who had been volunteering for about nine months explained: "What troubles me is the fact that my effort goes into producing food for the white middle class here in Hackney while I get no part in the harvest. I think the volunteers should get something more in return than what they are getting now. But, you know, I like to come and work. I like the people and I like the solidarity – so yes, I guess I will still volunteer, even though there is not even a bag of salad to be gained" (recorded conversation).

Summary

Regarding the work of Growing Communities I have argued that through the generative processes of reconnections and novel ways of making use of the local efforts, we can find a potential for activism and change. My findings are compatible with those of Bartlett: "We see awakenings to nature, system thinking, environmental concerns, and forms of civic actions embraced by different groups" (2005: 15). Thus, these urban gardens work as potential arenas for engaging with the politics of nature through contesting urban space. I have further identified how Growing Communities strive to achieve local engagement in food production and the community, to regain defining power over their urban lives and urban space. The ethnography at hand leaves the impression of Growing Communities as an important facilitator for positive arenas for reconnection with urban nature and ones neighbours. However, the question of whether their aim for civic responsibility has succeeded is more uncertain. At the one hand, they seek to established alternative modes of interaction, use of urban space and trade relations, but in order to achieve this urban agriculture has to become

embedded in the bureaucracy of applications for funding, allocation of land and permissions to operate. In order for urban agriculture to become a realistic alternative for urban development and urban life, their activist features must be controlled and managed through correct bureaucratic canals such as campaigning and lobbying. On the other hand, however, these different formations of urban environmentalism has managed to become embedded in the urban landscape, through material alternations and arenas for communion and conviviality, thus their mode of operation becomes more independent. Only through “taking place” will urban agriculture function as an alternative mode of doing and being in London, however not in opposition, but alongside everyday urban life.

6 Concluding remarks

> *In constructing networks and glocalities of their own, even . . . in their engagement with dominant networks, social movements might contribute to democratize social relations, contest visions of nature, challenge current techno-scientific hype and even suggest that economies can be organized differently from current neo-liberal dogmas* (Escobar 2001:166).

This thesis has primarily been focused on providing insight into the phenomena of urban agriculture in London, with attention towards ethnographic depictions and inherent nuances. I have woven together accounts of personal experience of reconnection to urban nature, shrouded with the histories of the groups that foster them, with a special attendance on Growing Communities. Emerging from a narrative of the English as gardeners, moving towards a paradigm of greening and sustainability, my attention has been directed towards the depth and breadth of attachment to urban agriculture (Barlett 2005: 314). I have sought to understand urban agriculture as a way of relating to the experience of self in the city of London, through social bonds forged, and a sense of connectedness to place and local environment (Budbandt and Roepstorff 2003: 15). I have moreover identified how the urban agriculturalists make use of these practices to inscribe their own imaginaries in the landscape of the city, and thus symbolically root themselves (Lien 2010: 1). Markers of identity, ideological beliefs and moral concerns will be acted out and further articulated in the garden, which is emotionally saturated and consisting of spatial elements that transmit the affect, feelings and emotions that in many cases enhances engagement (Brown and Pickerill 2009: 2). Participants carry with them this experience of the garden through their everyday urban life, with dirt under their fingernails and freckles on their nose, as well as notions about their personal responsibility for sustainable urban dwelling in London.

I have employed approaches that trace connections between heterogeneous elements as to reveal how certain practices and social forms has come into being. Attention towards relations have been key in that respect, along with the effect of relations in terms of what practices are undertaken and in what shape and form. I further argue that the conviviality based upon egalitarianism and non-violence, made friendship and solidarity key principles that allowed for the sense of belonging to place and a group of people, to exist beyond ephemeral meetings (Chatterton and Pickerill 2010). Hence, urban agriculture in London is a network of relations between entities that produce a set of practices, material configurations and processes of social gatherings (Pink 2008).

In the act of acquiring urban space to set up gardens, produce food and arrange social gatherings, I have argued that a new spatial order in the city takes shape, one in which urban nature is not simply included as a backdrop or a part of the scenography of the city, but as a resource that informs human practices and relations. The dimensions of place, such as the garden, the pick-up points, and the patch work farms, intersects and builds on each other, joining perceptions of the natural world with the built environment (Barlett 2005: 52). I have considered this to involve recognition of nature as an immanent force that runs through human life and not as something set apart and subjugated by human dwelling, but in fact a requirement. As the example with the treatment of slugs illustrate – what was significant for the urban agriculturalists was not the pristine, non-human landscape, but rather its multi-layered complexities through which they may differentiate particular ideological affiliations and imaginings of a desired way of being and becoming in the city (Hinchliffe and Whatmore 2006: 127).

In regards to the relevance of a study beyond what has been included in this thesis, I argue that there is much more that requires social analysis and anthropological attention. When I first started out on the project of studying urban agriculture I would always have to explain and describe what it was when speaking to Norwegians. However, the past two years I have witnessed a strong growth in interest and activities concerning food production in urban areas, here in Norway as well as internationally. Thus I have been convinced of the importance of studying how urban residents react and cope with threats such as environmental degradation, overpopulations and the issue of food security. Now that more than half of the world's population lives in urban areas, and that there is a recognition of the crisis of the city as closely related to the crisis of the environment, I argue that rethinking urban space and social analysis of the potential in these processes, are of vital importance (Isenhour 2011: 118). In my opinion – underpinned by the process of this study – urban agriculture as a practice and way of relating to the city and urban life, attends to these paramount issues. My study shows that engagement in the community garden potentially provides an entrée into issues of green urban dwelling and concerns for the effect of the food industry. That many of these encounters with urban nature has been described with satisfaction and joy, reflects a hunger or a readiness on the part of many urban dwellers to embrace a more engaged relationship with the living systems that support life in cities (Barlett 2005: 314). I find that deeper connection to place and a local social network will to a great extent increase awareness and sensitivity of urban development, much in line with the

quote of Escobar at the start of the chapter. A more sustainable future for urban life involves novel ways of incorporating urban nature, as to foster personal and social benefits such as psychological well-being, changing self-image, sense of place and sense of belonging to that place and the relations it engages (Barlett 2005: 312).

This thesis has primarily been concerned with depicting the process of urban agriculture as a way of life, rather than to investigate the potential for establishment of a new green urban order, as such. Partly due to the scope of the thesis and its practical limitations, as well as the empirical material at hand, hard-lined and critical approaches has not occurred as appropriate course of action on a preliminary study such as this. Therefor I wish to take the opportunity to urge further research on how urban agriculture, urban nature, and attention towards green urban development in its design and function might be incorporated in the city. Luccarelli and Røe points out that "You can never change anything by fighting its existing reality. To change something; build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete" (2012: 3). Urban agriculture cannot alone build a new model, but as we have seen: if it gains significant support amongst a number of urban residents, it could force the policymakers to consider their claims. An argument made against cooperating with the authorities is that the process diminishes activism, thus loses the real potential for change. However, my study has touched upon what happens if one goes beyond the common strategy of sustainability, as in changes of energy usage and willingness to reduce emission, to a larger process of *green urban dwelling*. A potential lies in further studies on how political discourses aimed at developing and empowering the public, able urban dwellers to make *green* changes in their own lives. Green urbanism surely affects the living conditions for city dwellers, and the potential for green urban dwelling to be incorporation to urban social policy, should be investigated further (Lucarelli and Røe 2012: 11). A possible response to this acknowledgement could be to investigate the architectural, structural, and/or social potential in re-establish an urban order where cities should be green, but also remain urban centres. I wish to make a call for more attention by anthropologists towards the issues addressed in this thesis, as well as these suggestions made towards possible further investigations. The city and urban dwelling requires anthropological and ethnographical research to grasp the social complexity and responses towards both national and international issues, such as climate change and food security. In order for anthropology as an academic discipline to provide valuable insight into the aspects of social life, the city and its residents must be included as field for study to a larger extent than it is.

Literature

Andersen, Bengt (2001): *The quest for community: a study of the Kentland*. Master's Thesis Oslo: Department for Anthropology

Amin, Ash and Nigel Thrift (2002): *Cities. Reimagining the Urban.* Cambridge: Polity Press

Barlett, Peggy (2005): Urban Place. Reconnecting with the Natural World. Cambridge: MIT Press

Bell, Derek and Andrew Dobson (2006): "Introduction" in Bell, Derek and Andrew Dobson red. *Environmental Citizenship* Cambridge: MIT Press

Bhatti, Mark and Andrew Church (2001): "Cultivating Natures: Homes and Gardens in Late Modernity" in *Sociology* Vol. 35, No. 2. BSA Publication Ltd.

Big Lottery Fund (2013): "About BIG". Acessed: 04.09.13. http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/about-big

Bridge, Gary, Tim Butler and Loretta Lees (2012): "Introduction: gentrification, social mix/ing and mixed communities" in Bridge, Gary, Tim Butler and Loretta Lees ed. *Mixed Communities. Gentrification by stealth?* Bristol: The Policy Press

Brown, Gavin and Jenny Pickerill (2009): "Space for emotion in the spaces of activism" in *Emotion, Space and Society*. Vol. 3, No. 4. Elsevier Ltd.

Butler, Tim and Garry Robson (2001): "Social Capital, Gentrification and Neighbourhood Change in London: A Comparison of Three South London Neighbourhoods" in *Urban Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 12. SAGE Publications

Campaign to Protect Rural England (2013): "What we do". Accessed 04.09.13 http://www.cpre.org.uk/what-we-do

Casey, Edward S. (1996): "How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena." in (1996) *Senses of Place*, edited by Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Certaeu, Michel de (1988): *The Practice of Everyday Life.* Berkley: University of California Press

Chatterton, Paul and Stuart Hodkinson (2007): "Autonomy in the city?" in *City: analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy action*, Vol. 10, No. 3. Routledge

Chatterton, Paul and Jenny Pickerill (2006): "Notes towards autonomous geographies; creation, resistance and self-management as survival tactics" in *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 30, Issue 6. SAGE Publications

Chatterton, Paul and Jenny Pickerill (2010): "Everyday activism and transitions towards post-capitalistic worlds" in *Transactions of the Institute of the British Geographers*. Royal Geographical Society

Checker, Melissa (2011): “Wiped out by the “Greenwave”: Environmental Gentrification and the Paradoxical Politics of Urban Sustainability” in *City & Society,* Vol. 23, Issue 2. American Anthropological Association.

Coates, Peter (1998): *Nature*. Cambridge: Polity Press

Csordas, Thomas J. (2005 [1999]): “The Body’s Career in Anthropology” in (2000 [1999]) *Anthropological Theory Today* ed. Henrietta L. Moore. Cambridge: Polity Press

Davidson, Aidan and Marianne Lien (2010): “Roots, Rupture and Remembrance. The Tasmanian Lives of Monterey Pine” in *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol. 15(2). SAGE Publications

Degnen, Catherine (2009): "On vegetable love: Gardening, plants and people in the north of England." Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute vol. 15.

Dooren, Thom van and Deborah Bird Rose (2012): “Storied-places in a multispecies city” in *Humanimalia: a journal of human/animal interface studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2. DePauw University

Duffey, Maureen (2001): England. The Making of the Myth from Stonehenge to Albert Square. London: Fourth Estate

Eder, Klaus (1996): *The Social Construction of Nature.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Escobar, Arturo (1998): "Whose Knowledge, Whose Nature? Biodiversity, Conservation, and the Political Ecology of Social Movements." *Journal of Political Ecology* vol. 5.

Farquhar, Judith (2006): “Food, Eating and the Good Life” in Keane, Webb, Susanne Küchler, Mike Rowlands, Christopher Tilley and Patricia Spyer ed. *Handbook of Material Culture*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd

Florida, Richard (2002): *The Rise of the Creative Class.* New York: Basic Books

Fürst, Elisabeth L’orange (1996), ”Mat – et språk for overskridelse”. I *Samtiden*, (3). Oslo: Achehoug

Giddens, Anthony (1991): *Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford: Stanford University Press

Granoveter, Mark S. (1973): “The Strength of Weak Ties” in *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 78, No. 6. The University of Chicago Press

Gray, John N. (2000): At Home in the Hills: A Sense of Place at the Scottish Borders. New York: Berghanh Books

Hackney.gov.uk (2012): “Environment and Planning” Accessed 07.10.12 http://www.hackney.gov.uk/environment-planning.htm

Hall, Suzanne (2012): *City, Street and Citizen. The measure of the* ordinary. New York: Routledge

Hannerz, Ulf (1980): *Exploring the City. Inquiries Toward an Urban Anthropology*. New York: Colombia University Press

Harraway, Donna (2008): *When Species Meet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Harvey, David (2012): Rebel Cities. From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution. London: Verso

Hassel, Malve von (2005): "Community Gardens in New York City: Place, Community, and Individuality" in Bartlett, Peggy (2005): *Urban Place. Reconnecting with the Natural World.* Cambridge: The MIT Press

Helmreich, Stefan and S. Eben Kirksey (2010): "The Emergence of Multispecies Ethnography" in *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 25. Issue 4. The American Anthropological Association.

Heynen, Nik, Maria Kaika and Erik Swyngedouw ed. (2006): *In the Nature of Cities. Urban political ecology and the politics of urban* metabolism. New York: Routledge

Hinchliffe, Steve and Sarah Whatmore (2006): "Living cities: Towards a politics of conviviality" in *Science as Culture*, Vol. 15, No. 2. Routledge

Hinchliffe, Steve, Matthew B. Kearnes, Monica Degen and Sarah Whatmore (2003): "Urban wild things: a cosmopolitical experiment" in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 23.

Horton, Dave (2006): "Demonstrating new Environmental Citizenship? A Study of Everyday Life among Green Activists" in *Environmental Citizenship* red. Bell, Derek and Andrew Dobson. Cambridge: MIT Press

Howes, David (2006): "Scent, Sound and Synaesthesia: Intersensoriality and Material Culture Theory" in Keane, Webb, Susanne Küchler, Mike Rowlands, Christopher Tilley and Patricia Spyer ed. *Handbook of Material Culture*.London: SAGE Publications Ltd

Hutchinson, Sharon E. (1996): *Nuer Dilemmas. Coping with Money, War and the State*. Berkley: University of California Press

Ingold, Tim (2000): The Perception of the Environment. Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill. London: Routledge.

Ingold, Tim (2004): "Culture on the Ground. The World Perceived Through the Feet" in *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol. 9(3). SAGE Publications Ltd.

Ingold, Tim (2011): Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description. London: Routledge.

Isenhour, Cindy (2011): "How the Grass Becomes Greener in the City: On Urban Imaginings and Practices of Sustainable Living in Sweden" in *City & Society*, Vol. 23, Issue 2. American Anthropological Society

Jamie Oliver (2013): "About Jamie" Accessed 04.09.13
http://www.jamieoliver.com/about/jamie-oliver-biog

Kapferer, Bruce (1984): “The Ritual Process and the Problems of Reflexivity in Sinhalese Demon Exorcism” in red. MacAloon, John *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle.* Institute of Studies of Human Issues.

Kapferer, Bruce (2010): “Introduction, In the Event – towards and Anthropology of Generic Moments” in *Social Analysis*, Vol. 54, Issue 3. Berghahn Journals

Kirksey, S. Eben, and Stefan Helmreich (2010): "The Emergence of Multispecies Ethnography." *Cultural Anthropology* vol. 25 (4)

Krogstad, Anne (1986): “Pønkere og Symbolendringer” i *Tidsskrift for samfunnsforskning.*

Latour, Bruno (2005): Reassembling the Social. An introduction to Actor-Network Studies.Oxford: University Press

London.gov.uk. (2013): “Greater London Authorities” Accessed 20.10.13 http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/gla

Lien, Marianne (2010) “Still living like people from somewhere else. Natives and invasives in Tasmanian landscape imagery” in ed. Summo-O'Connell, Renata (2010): *Imagined Australia*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing

Luccarelli, Mark and Per Gunnar Røe (2012): “Introduction: Nature, Urbanism and Liveability” in red. Luccarelli, Mark and Per Gunnar Røes: *Green Oslo. Visions, Planning and Discourse.* Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd

Hackney Council (2011): “Counting Hackney’s population using administrative data ~An analysis of change between 2007 and 2011” in Mayhew, Les (2011): *Neighbourhood knowledge management.* Accessed 20.08.12 http://www.hackney.gov.uk/Assets/Documents/estimating-and-profiling-the-population-of-hackney.pdf

Malinowski, Bronislaw ([1935] 2002): *Collected Works.* New York: Routledge

Miller, Daniel (2008): *The Comfort of Things.* Cambridge: Polity Press

Mueggler, Erik (2001): *The Age of Wild Ghosts. Memory, Violence and Place in Southwest China*. Berkely: University of California Press

Myhre, Knut Christian (2013) “Introduction: Cutting and Connecting – ‘Afrinesian’ Perspectives on Networks, Relationality,and Exchange” in press *Social Analysis*, Vol. 57 (3).

Ortner, Sherry (1973): “On Key Symbols” in American Anthropologist, Journal of the American Anthropological Association 75 (11).

Parkins, Wendy and Geoffrey Craig (2006): *Slow Living.* Oxford: Berg

Permat, Adriana (2009): “State Power, Private Plots and the Greening of Havana’s Urban Agriculture Movement” in *City & Society*, Vol. 21, Issue 1. American Anthropological Association.

Phal, Ray (2005): “Are all communities communities in the mind?” in *The Sociological Review*. Oxford: Blacwell Publishing Ltd.

Pink, Sarah (2008a): “An urban tour: the sensory sociality of ethnographic place-making” in *Ethnography*, Vol. 9(2). SAGE Publications

Pink, Sarah (2008b): “Re-thinking Contemporary Activism: From Community to Emplaced Sociality” in *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 73:2. Routledge Journals

Pink, Sarah (2009): *Doing Sensory Ethnography.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Roepstorff, Andreas, and Nils Bubandt (2003): "General introduction: The critique of culture and the plurality of nature " in (2003) *Imagining Nature: Practices of Cosmology and Identity*, edited by Andreas Roepstorff, Nils Bubandt and Kalevi Kull. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.

Ruraf Foundation: “What is urban agriculture” Accessed. 07.11.12. http://www.ruaf.org/node/512

Sanjek, Roger (1990): “A Vocabulary for Fieldnotes” in Sanjek, Roger red. *Field notes. The Makings of Anthropology.* Cornell University Press

Short, Joe: “About Growing Communities”. Accessed 14.10.11 http://www.growingcommunities.org/about-us/

Soil Association (2013): “Buy Organic”. Accessed 04.09.13. http://www.soilassociation.org/buyorganic

Steel, Carolyn (2009*): Hungry City. How Food Shapes Our Lives*. London: Vintage

Stewart, Alex (1998): *The Ethnographer's Method*. Qualitative Research Method Series vol.46. Edited by Marc L. Miller, Peter K. Manning and John Van Maanen. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Thomas, Julian (2006): “Phenomenology and Material Culture” in Keane, Webb, Susanne Küchler, Mike Rowlands, Christopher Tilley and Patricia Spyer ed. *Handbook of Material Culture*.London: SAGE Publications Ltd

Tilley, Christopher (1994): “Ch. 1: Space, Place, Landscape and Perception: Phenomenological Perspectives” in *A Phenomenology of Landscape.* Berg Publishers

Tilley, Christopher (2009) “What Gardens Mean” in Vannini, Philip red. *Material Culture and Technology in Everyday Life. Ethnographic Approaches.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing

Tonkiss, Fran (2005): *Space, the City and Social Theory.* Cambridge: Polity Press

Torjusen, Hanne, Margareta Wandel & Anders Nyberg (1999): “Økologisk produsert mat: forbrukernes vurderinger og bruksmønster”. *SIFO Rapport nr. 5-1999.*

Tsing, Anna (2002): “Conclusions: The Global Situation” in Inda, J. X. and Rosaldo, R. red. *The Anthropology of Globalization*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Vannini, Philip (2009): “Introduction” in *Material Culture and Technology in Everyday Life. Ethnographic Approaches.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing